

Islamic Creed And Spirituality

Compiled and written

By

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Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Any mistakes found are from me, all that is true is by Allah's
grace

Let religious knowledge be sought and imparted for the sake
of Allah

Preface

Part I i.e. Defence of Asharism is a compiled research based on the extensive researches done by the contemporary Islamic scholars of Islam, a defence of the orthodox school of faith in Islam, the school which stands out pure from the many other sects that Muslims have seen throughout their intellectual and political history.

Part II i.e. The Theological defence of the orthodox creed is a refutation of the salafi theology using rational theology of Islam.

Part III is an attempt to present to people one of the main aims of Islamic worship, which is the purification of one's own self, known as Sufism. It is a basic and brief work, and has been mostly based on the book of Imam, Ghazzali 'Al-Arbauun fi Usool Ad-Din'. I have also put other scholarly ideas about Islamic belief and law, such as Imam Ibn Asakir, Sheikh Nuh Keller and others. In the introduction you can know the three foundations of Islam, and how Sufism tends to achieve it. Then I have described what Sufism is, then the two main parts of the book being 'the prerequisites and the self-purification'. Lastly it deals with the idea of Sufism and the general Muslims' position regarding it. The last two chapters

deal with the prevalent misconceptions about Sufism, and conclusion. I pray to Allah that we Muslims especially those of Bangladesh, can benefit from this book to attain the highest qualities of the spiritual human, thus freeing ourselves from the title which presents us to the world as 'degenerated ignorant'. If you have any questions please contact me on islamicgov@hotmail.co.uk

I pay my special gratitude and pray for Mr Siddique (Ex Ambassador), for his painstaking revision work. May Allah bless us and give us the ability to acquire His pleasure.

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Part 1 Islamic creed according to orthodox theologians:

The Ash'arites (Ahl Sunnah Wa Jamah)

Opening remarks

Sheikh Muhammad 'Alawi Maliki: "Many sons/daughters of Muslims are ignorant of the Ash'ari School, whom it represents, and its positions on the tenets of the Islamic faith (*Aqeedah*), and yet some of them are not God-fearing enough to refrain from accusing it of deviance, departure from the religion of Islam, and heresy about the attributes of Allah. The ignorance of the Ash'ari school is a cause of rendering the unity of the Ahl al-Sunnah dispersing its ranks. Some have gone as far as to consider the Ash'aris among the categories of heretical sects, though it is beyond me how believers can be linked with misbelievers, or how Sunni Muslims can be considered equal with the most extreme faction of the Mu'tazilites, the Jahmites.

"Shall We deal with Muslims as We do criminals? How is it that you judge?" [Qur'an 68:35-36]

The Ash'aris are the Imams of the distinguished figures of guidance among the scholars of the Muslims, whose knowledge has filled the world from east to west, and whom people have unanimously concurred upon their excellence, scholarship, and religiousness. They include the first rank of Sunni scholars and the most brilliant of their luminaries, who stood in the face of the excesses committed by the

Mu'tazilites, and who constitute whole sections of the foremost Imams of Hadiths, Sacred Law, Quranic exegesis. **Sheikh al-Islam Ahmad Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani** (d. 852/1449; Rahimullah), the mentor of Hadith scholars and author of the book "*Fath al-Bari bi sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*", which not a single Islamic scholar can dispense with, was Ash'ari. The sheikh of the scholars of Sunni Islam, **Imam Nawawi** (d. 676/1277; Rahimullah), author of "*Sharh Sahih Muslim*" and many other famous works, was Ash'ari. The master of Quranic exegetes, **Imam Qurtubi** (d. 671/1273; Rahimullah), author of "*al-Jami' li ahkan al-Qur'an*", was Ash'ari. **Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Hajar Haytami** (d. 974/1567; Rahimullah), who wrote "*al-Zawajir 'an iqtiraf al-kaba'ir*", was Ash'ari. The Sheikh of Sacred Law and Hadiths, the conclusive definitive **Zakariyya Ansari** (d. 926/1520; Rahimullah), was Ash'ari. **Imam Abu Bakr Baqillani** (d. 403/1013; Rahimullah), **Imam 'Asqalani**; **Imam Nasafi** (d. 710/1310; Rahimullah); **Imam Shirbini** (d. 977/1570; Rahimullah); **Abu Hayyan Tawhidi**, author of the Quranic commentary "*al-Bahr al-muhit*"; **Imam Ibn Juzayy** (d. 741/1340; Rahimullah); author of "*al-Tashil fi 'ulum al-Tanzil*"; and others - all of these were Imams of the Ash'aris. If we wanted to name all of the top scholars of Hadiths, Quranic exegesis, and Sacred Law who were Imams of the Ash'aris, we would be hard put to do so and would require volumes merely to list these illustrious figures whose wisdom has filled the earth from east to west. And it is incumbent upon us to give credit where credit is due, recognising the merit of those of knowledge and virtue who have served the Sacred Law of the Greatest Messengers (Allah bless him and grant him peace). What good is to be hoped for us if we impugn our foremost scholars and righteous forbearers with charges of aberrancy and misguidance? Or how should Allah give us the benefit of their

scholarship if we believe it is deviance and departure from the way of Islam? I ask you, is there a single Islamic scholar of the present day, among all the PhD's and geniuses, who has done what Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani or Imam Nawawi have, of the service rendered by these two noble Imams (May Allah enfold them in His mercy and bliss) to the pure Prophetic Sunnah? How should we charge them and all Ash'aris with aberrancy when it is we who are in need of their scholarship? Or how can we take knowledge from them if they were in error? For as Imam Zuhri (d. 124/742; rahimullah) says, **"This knowledge is religion, so look well to whom you are taking your religion from."**

Is it not sufficient for someone opposed to the Ash'aris to say, "Allah have mercy on them, they used reasoning (*ijtihad*) in figuratively interpreting the divine attributes, which it would have been fitter for them not to do"; instead of accusing them of deviance and misguidance, or displaying anger towards whoever considers them to be of the Sunni Community? If Imams Nawawi, 'Asqalani, Qurtubi, Baqillani, al-Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, Haytami, Zakariyya Ansari, and many others were not among the most brilliant scholars and illustrious geniuses, or of the Sunni Community, then who are the Sunnis? I sincerely entreat all who call others to this religion or who work in the field of propagating Islam to fear Allah respecting the honour of the Community of Muhammad (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is possessed of goodness until the Final Hour, we are bereft of any if we fail to acknowledge the worth and excellence of our learned." In conclusion, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa Jamah are the true followers of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions (Allah be pleased with them all), followed by those who trod their path for the last 1400 years. It is in

summary the followers of Imam Abu'l Hasan al-Ash'ari (Rahimullah) and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Rahimullah) in Aqeedah, and this saved sect is represented by the adherents of one of the four schools - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali today. This is the sect which has had the largest following throughout Islamic history ([*as-Sawad al-Az'am*](#)) as confirmed by the Quranic and Hadiths based evidence and it will remain dominant until the Hour is established, Inshallah.

What is Ash'arism?

'Ash'arism is the name of a philosophico-religious school of thought in Islam that developed during the fourth and fifth/tenth and eleventh centuries. This movement was "an attempt not only to purge Islam of all non-Islamic elements which had quietly crept into it but also to harmonize the religious consciousness with the religious thought of Islam." It laid the foundation of an orthodox Islamic theology or orthodox *Kalam*, as opposed to the rationalist *Kalam* of the Mu'tazilites; and in opposition to the extreme orthodox class, it made use of the dialectical method for the defence of the authority of divine revelation as applied to theological subjects.

The position at the end of the third/ninth century was such that the development of such a movement as orthodox *Kalam* was inevitable. The rationalization of faith, which developed, at the beginning of the second century of the Hijrah as a systematic movement of thought, in the name of

rationalism in Islam or Mu'tazilite movement, was, in its original stage, simply an attempt to put Islam and its basic principles on a rational foundation, by giving a consistent rational interpretation to the different dogmas and doctrines of Islam. But when the Mu'tazilite rationalists began to study the Arabic translations of the works of Greek physicists and philosophers made available to them by the early 'Abbasid Caliphs, particularly by al-Mansur and al-Mamun, they began to apply the Greek philosophical methods and ideas to the interpretation of the *basic* principles of Islam as well.

Some of the early 'Abbasid Caliphs, particularly al-Mamun, began to patronize the rationalism of the Mu'tazilites in public. The Mu'tazilite speculation, in the hands of the later Mu'tazilites, those of the second and third generations, under the influence of Greek philosophy and with the active support and patronage of the Caliphs, tended to be purely speculative and "absolutely unfettered, and in some cases led to a merely negative attitude of thought." They made reason the sole basis of truth and reality and thus identified the sphere of philosophy with that of religion. They tried to interpret faith in terms of pure thought. They ignored the fact that the basic principles of religion are, by their very nature, incapable of logical demonstration or rational proof. The basic principles of Islam deal with supersensible realities and, as such, they must first be accepted on the authority of revelation. The Mu'tazilites, in their zeal to judge everything by reason alone, destroyed the personality of God and reduced Him to a bare indefinable universality or to an abstract unity. This idea of an abstract, impersonal, absolute God could not appeal to the ordinary Muslims. The orthodox section of the people

reacted strongly against the Mu'tazilite rationalism and began to consider the Mu'tazilites to be heretics. The extreme rationalistic attitude of the later Mu'tazilites was followed by powerful reaction from the orthodox section of the people. This reaction was greatly aggravated by the unfortunate attempt of the Caliph al-Mamun to force Mu'tazilism (rationalist *Kalam*) on his subjects by introducing *mihnah* (a compulsory test of faith) in the Mu'tazilite doctrines, particularly in their doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'an. The whole of the third/ninth century was a time of reaction. The orthodox Muslims (and among them were the Traditionists [the Muhaddithin]), the Zahirites (the followers of Dawud Ibn `Ali), and the Muslim jurists (*fuqaha'*) adhered strictly to Tradition and literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and refused to admit any "innovation" (*bidah*) in the *Shareeah* (the Islamic Code). Any theological discussion was considered an "innovation" and was as such a cause of displeasure to them. The reactionary influence of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal and his Zahirites followers was very strong at that period and the orthodox Muslims kept themselves safely aloof from the Mu'tazilites and the philosophers. The reactions against the rationalist *Kalam* went to such an extreme that even the anthropomorphic verses of the Qur'an were interpreted by them in a purely literal sense. Malik bin Anas said: "God's settling Himself firmly upon His Throne is known, the how of it is unknown; belief in it is obligatory; and questioning about it is an innovation." Any speculation about sacred things was considered an innovation. Every dogma was to be believed in without raising the question how or why (*bila kaifa*).

But such an attitude of blind faith could not be maintained for any length of time. Islam, as a universal religion and as a living force, had to adapt itself to new thoughts and to new surroundings. So, as time went on, there arose gradually a party, from amongst the orthodox section of the Muslims, who realized the necessity of putting Islam on a solid ground by advancing "reasons" for the traditional beliefs, of defending these beliefs against all sorts of attacks internal and external, and thus purging their faith of all the non-Islamic elements that had crept into it. They founded the orthodox theology of Islam by using *Kalam* or the philosophical method in order to meet the dialectical reasoning of the Mu'tazilites. These theologians who employed *Kalam* for the defence of their faith were, therefore, known as the Mutakallimun (orthodox theologians). But, although these thinkers used philosophical method in their discussions, they obtained the primary materials from revelation. They developed a rival science of reasoning to meet the Mu'tazilites on their own ground. In the beginning this new orthodox theological movement developed privately and secretly. It was at first a gradual unconscious drift. It could not come to the open for fear of public criticism. Al Junaid, for instance, had to discuss the unity of God behind closed doors. Al-Shafi'i held that some trained people might defend and purify the faith but that should not be done in public. Al-Muhasibi and other contemporaries of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal incurred his displeasure for defending the faith with arguments or reason. But gradually the movement gathered strength and began to be openly preached almost at the same time in different places of the Muslim world in Mesopotamia by Abu al-Hasan `Ali bin Ismail al-Ash'ari (d. 330 or 334/941 or 945), in Egypt by al-Tahawi (d. 331/942), and in Samarqand by Abu Mansur

al-Maturidi (d. 333/ 944). But of these three, al-Ash'ari became the most popular hero, before whom the Mu'tazilite system (the rationalist *Kalam*) went down, and he came to be known as the founder of the orthodox philosophical theology, and the school founded by him was named after him as Ash`arism.

Al-Ash'ari was born at Basra. Regarding his date of birth there is difference of opinion. Ibn Khallikan, in his discussion of the life of al-Ash'ari, mentions that he was born in 260 or 270/873 or 883 and died at Baghdad in 330/941 or sometime after that. According to Shibli Nu'mani and Ibn `Asakir (the author of *Tabyin Kidhb al-Muftari*, on the life and teachings of al-Ash'ari), he was born in 270/873 and died in 330/941. He was buried between Karkh and Bab al-Basrah (the gate of Basrah). He was a descendant of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, one, of the famous Companions of the Prophet. Al-Ash'ari, in his early youth, came under the care of the great Mu'tazilite scholar of the Basrite school, Abu 'Ali Muhammad bin `Abd al-Wahhab al-Jubba'i, and, as a disciple of his, became an adherent of the Mu'tazilite school and continued to support its doctrines up to the age of forty. After that there happened a sudden change in his mind and one day he went to the Mosque of Basra and declared: "He who knows me, knows who I am, and he who does not know me, let him know that I am Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Ash'ari, that I used to maintain that the Qur'an is created, that eyes of men shall not see God, and that the creatures create their actions. Lo! I repent that I have been a Mu'tazilite. I renounce these opinions and I take the engagement to refute the Mu'tazilites and expose their infamy and turpitude." What brought about this sudden

change in al-Ash'ari is not definitely known to us. Shibli in his *'Ilm al-Kalam* says that "the change came to him due to some directions which he had obtained in a dream.." Ibn Khallikan mentions in this connection the story of a public discussion in which al-Ash'ari met his old Mu'tazilite teacher, al-Jubba'i, on the problem of *salah un aslah*, i. e., the problem whether God's actions are to be based on rational consideration and whether He is bound to do what is best for His creatures. Al-Ash'ari came to al-Jubba'i and presented the case of three brothers, one being God-fearing, another godless, and a third having died as a child, and asked him as to what would be their positions in the next world. Al-Jubba'i could not give a satisfactory and consistent reply to that question and, on his having failed to justify rationally the Mu'tazilite doctrine of *salah wa aflah*, al-Ash'ari abandoned the Mu'tazilite camp. But whatever might have been the cause of this change, when he changed he was terribly in earnest. After the change he wrote a number of books and Ibn Furak says that the number amounted to three hundred. Ibn 'Asakir Dimashqi has given the titles of ninety-three of them, but only a few have been preserved and are enumerated by Brockelmann. His work *al-Ibanah 'an Usul al-Diyanah* was printed at Hyderabad, Deccan (India), in 1321/1903 and a small treatise *Risalah fi Istihsan al-Khaud fi al-Kalam* was printed in 1323/1905 and reprinted at Hyderabad in 1344/1925. Al-Ash'ari's other famous works are *al-Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* (published in Istanbul in 1348/1929), *Kitab al-Sharh wal-Tafsil*, *Luma'*, *Mu'jaz*, *I'adah al-Burhan*, and *Tab'in*. Of these books the *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilaf al-Musalliyyin* is the most authentic book on the views of different schools about religious dogmas and doctrines. *Al-Maqalat* was written much earlier than the other books on the same subject, such as Shahrastani's *Kitab al-Milal*

wal-Nihal, or ibn Hazm's *al-Fasl fi al-Milal wal-Ahwa' wal Nihal*. Ibn Taimiyyah said in his *Minhaj al-Sunnah* that the most comprehensive of the books he went through on the views of different people on the basic principles of Islam was al-Ash'ari's *al-Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* and that he (al-Ash'ari) discussed many of such views in details as were not even mentioned by others. Ibn al-Qayyim also spoke very highly of this work. In his *Hadi al-Arwah* and *Ijtima' al-Juyush al-Islamiyyah*, he said, "Shahrastani, 'Abd al-Qahir Baghdadi, and other later writers on the subject simply copied from al-Ash'ari's book and did not discuss the views in details." Al-Ash'ari's other famous book *al-Ibanah 'an Usul al-Diyanah* seems to have been written by him just after his abandoning the Mu'tazilite views. In this book we find he is almost a Zahirite. The reaction against the Mu'tazilite speculation might have been very strong in his mind at that period. *Al-Maqalat* seems to be a later work. The *Risalah fi Istihsan al-Khaud* deals with the objections raised by the extremely orthodox against the use of *Kalam*, and the replies given by al-Ash'ari, justifying its use in matters of faith. Al-Ash'ari's theology has been discussed mainly in these books. He had a good number of pupils who passed as famous theologians and who spread and developed his doctrines and dogmas. Some of those older Ash'arites were abu Sahl Saluqi, abu Quffal, abu Zaid Maruzi, Zahir bin Ahmad, Hafiz abu Bakr Jurjani, Shaikh abu Muhammad Tabari, and abu al-Hasan Bahili. Some of the pupils of these older Ash'arites became still more famous and the best known among them are Qadi abu Bakr Baqillani, abu Bakr bin Furak, abu al-Qasim al-Qushairi and abu Ishaq Isfra'ini and his pupil abu al-Ma'ali al-Juwaini, known as Imam al-Haramain." (Ash'arism by M. Abdul Hye, M.A, Ph.D)

The Aqeedah of the early Muslims before the fitna of the Mu'tazilites were that they used to affirm for Allah, all that is affirmed by Allah such as Life, knowledge, hearing, speech, power, will, sight, honour, dignity, blessing, and grandeur. They didn't use to separate between attributes of essence and attributes of deeds. Rather they used to take all of these attributes in a single way, attributing to Allah. As to the attributes of hand, eyes, etc they used to term such attributes as attributes of force, and didn't use to interpret. (Milal Wa Nahal, by Sheikh Shahrastani, 79).

We can see that in such attributes of hands, eyes, etc they didn't connect the word 'haqiqi', which in Islam means 'use of the word in the context in which it is made for i.e. literal meaning', because you see in Islamic science word is divided in to two types: that which has a meaning in the literal sense (original meaning), and that which has a metaphorical meaning. So for example hand in the literal sense means an embodied form with flesh and blood, and as to the metaphorical meaning it can mean, power, ability, help etc in context.

But the certain part of the early Muslims (i.e. salafs) went to the extent of embodying Allah in their hope of affirming the attributes such as hands, eyes, feet, etc. Some went to the side of interpreting such attributes by the authority of language in the metaphorical side, and some completely stopped from interpretation and said 'we do not know the true intent of the word which came down (for attributes).'

(Milal Wa Nahal 79)

Their saying of 'we do not know the true intent of..' excludes the possibility of literalism, and allows for the possibility of the existence of a meaning other than that of literal intent necessitating a form for Allah (glory is only for Allah). They also stated that we are not obliged to know the meaning of such attributes or its interpretation. Then there came a certain generation later on who added to the previous statement of the early Muslims 'taking it in the evident/literal way', and an explanation which didn't allow interpretation or abstinence from the acceptance of evident literal meaning, thereby falling in anthropomorphism, and that in direct contradiction to what the early Muslims said. This anthropomorphism was purely in the Jews, but not in all of them, rather in the sect named 'Qaraeen', who did such when they got a text from Torah pointing to such. (ibid.79-80)

One thing should be said that the great salafi scholar Bin Baaz, followed such a method of acceptance when he stated that Allah has a n attribute of shadow of His own, on the basis of a hadeeth narrated by Bukhari and Muslim. (<http://binbaz.org.sa/mat/4234>)

It should also be noted that some early Muslims used ilm kalâm to defend the faith to the point that it was fully formed and decisively built by Imam Abu Hasan Ashari. The early Muslims were pure of belief till Mu'tazilites came and the early Muslims took help of Kalam (logic and philosophy) to refute them and establish a fully vibrant theology of the orthodox Islam, which was called Asharism. (Milal wa Nahal 81)

Conclusion: It is clear that the early Muslims 1) didn't differentiate between attributes of essence and attributes of deeds 2) they didn't mean by 'affirmation' taking of the evident meaning, and literalism 3) They didn't mean by affirmation that such attributes as hands, face, eyes have form (kaifiyya) in respect to Allah but we are ignorant of such form 4) they abstained from interpreting by saying 'We do not know the intent of such, so we believe as it came and affirm by abstaining from saying anything about it. 6) they stated that attributes such as hands, eyes etc are attributes of force, or force-attributes (sifat jabariyya), meaning which points to force and power, and this doesn't necessarily imply embodiment or having a form.

The modern day salafis as well as Ibn Taimiyyah have implied by affirmation taking such in the evident way and literalism. They said that such attributes are attributes of essence. They have divided attributes of essence and attributes of deeds. They say Allah, has face, two hands, two eyes, one feet, one shin, a palm, fingers, Allah laughs, descends from His throne where He is sitting, Allah runs and walks and so on, all the human attributes, taking such in the evident way, not knowing the intent of such words in Islam.

In such evident tajseem (embodiment) by such people as salafis and their likes, the scholars of ahl Sunnah were forced to make interpretation. Interpretation can be wrong but yet also right if done in the correct context and process, but like the early Muslims, it best not to do if no need is there or unless compelled.

A lie that is attributed to Imam Ashari is that he renounced his views at the end before his death and the proof the anti-Ashairas give is his book *Al-Ibana*, but as it has been stated above that it was one of his early writings, and not his last. Says Sheikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller:

‘...the claims that Imam Abul Hasan Ash’ari (d. 324/936) repudiated his own positions are not new, but have been circulated by these Hanbalis for a long time, a fact that compelled the hadith master (hafiz) Ibn ‘Asakir to carefully investigate this question, and the *sanads* (chains of narrators) for the attribution of these repudiations to Ash’ari. The results of his research furnished probably the best intellectual biography of Ash’ari ever done, a book that rebuts these claims thoroughly and unequivocally, called *Tabyin kadhīb al-muftari fi ma nusiba ila al-Imam al-Ash’ari* [On showing the untruth of the liars, concerning what has been ascribed to Imam Ash’ari], that proves that there are liars in all the *sanads* that impute this to Imam Ash’ari. The book is in print, and whoever would like the details should read it.

Imam Ash’ari’s *al-Ibana ‘an usul al-diyana* [The clarification of the bases of the religion] was not his last book, but rather among the *first* after he broke with Mu’tazilism. Imam Kawthari states:

The *Ibana* was authored at the first of his return from Mu’tazilite thought, and was by way of trying to induce [n: the Hanbali literalist] Barbahari (d. 328/940) to embrace the tenets of faith of Ahl al-Sunna. Whoever believes it to be the last of his books believes something that is patently false. Moreover, pen after pen of the anthropomorphists has had free disposal of the text—particularly after the strife (fitna)

that took place in Baghdad [n: after A.H. 323, when Hanbalis ("the disciples of Barbahari") gained the upper hand in Baghdad, Muslims of the Shafi'i madhhab were beaten, and anthropomorphism became the faith ('aqida) of the day (Ibn Athir: *al-Kamal fi al-tarikh*, 7.114)]—so that what is in the work that contradicts the explicit positions transmitted from Ash'ari by his own disciples, and their disciples, cannot be relied upon (*al-Sayf al-saqil*, 108).

This is borne out by hadith master (hafiz) Dhahabi in his *Siyar a'lam al-nubala'* (15.90), as well as Ibn 'Asakir's *Tabyin kadhhib al-muftari*. As for seeing dreams, dreams may warm the heart, but they are not a proof for either Islamic law or tenets of faith. In his introduction to Ibn 'Asakir's work, Kawthari notes that "the anthropomorphists are the ones who seem to need this [relating of dreams]: when unable to prove their point while awake, they go to sleep, to find the proofs they are looking for while asleep, to fill their books with them" (*Tabyin kadhhib al-muftari* (21–22)).'

People who attack Ash'arites:

People who attack them are those who claim-

Allah, has face, two hands, two eyes, one foot, one shin, a palm, fingers, Allah laughs, descends from His throne where He is sitting, Allah runs and walks and so on, all the human attributes, taking such in the evident way, not knowing the intent of such words in Islam.

They do not know whether Allah is a body or not

Allah is a body but unlike created bodies

Allah has direction and can be confined in a place

Allah speaks with words and letters (so that would necessitate a medium of air!!!)

Tawhid (Oneness of Allah) is divided in to three parts

These are the main attributes of the attackers and they call themselves the salafis or those who follow the path of the companions of the Prophet and those who were just after them. We will see Inshallah the difference between the true salafs (our first predecessors just after Prophet (saas)) and the new salafi sect of today.

Defence of the ashaira position about:

Allah's Names and Attributes in general and against anthromorphism

'... After we separate Allah Supreme from being similar to creation we say that the absolute howness of these attributes is known by Allah. It is best that we try to understand the "*murad*"(the intended) of the use of these attributes. For example when Allah says "Allah's hand is over their Hands" we can understand the general meaning which is Allah is helping them or when Allah says "under our eyes" the general intention is "under our supervision". When it is used

"our" the meaning is Allah and all the angels He has commanded under His command when He has wished for a deed to be done, as it is Allah's kingdom Allah uses His servants as a proof of His majesty and His arrogance.

I say to those who say Allah's attributes is to be believed in the Haqiqi (literal) sense and that is when Allah has said that Allah has created Adam in His image, we cannot escape from this unless we interpret it because if we believe in it in the real sense then Allah's image is like Adam's image. Glory be to Allah as there is none like unto Him. It is possible that when Allah says this the meaning may be that the image of Allah and of Adam in the sense Allah is Merciful and Adam is merciful, Allah is wise, Adam is wise and so on but the difference is Allah is Most Merciful and Adam is only merciful to the extent Allah has willed and so on, but if we also take in the hands and feet of Adam (a), there is no way we say that Adam has a hand of x feet while Allah has Hands of y feet (May Allah forgive me and Glory be to Allah). This is the danger of saying that Allah's attributes must be believed in the haqiqi sense (literal sense), as well as there is also danger of saying Allah's attributes should be believed in the majazi sense (interpretation), because interpretation can be wrong, but at times we need to interpret to avoid tajseem. So we say we believe in Allah's attributes and Allah knows as to its true meaning and intent (this is the position of the true salafs). Even a leading salafi scholar sheikh Utheymeen in sharh Aqeedah Wasatiyya interprets the hadeeth 'Allah created Adam in His own image' meaning that Allah has attributed Himself with an image in the sense of honor and dignity for Adam, but not in the real sense.

Indeed some attributes of Allah can't be said to be possessed by the created existence even in the smallest sense. We say Allah is Most Merciful and also it is possible to say that person is merciful without the prefix "most", but is it possible to say that man has created this thing just as Allah has created this thing? Some attributes are thus solely for Allah, such as Creator, and Eternal (Living). No other thing in existence even shares these two attributes even in the partial sense. Allah creates in us a feeling and identity of His existence and this is what makes us acknowledge the fact that Allah is the Creator, the Lord, and Most Merciful and so on, and this is attained by coming in contact with Divine Revelation and/or through pondering the creation around us. Allah has created the intellect, which is the place of understanding and thinking, Allah created the Soul a mystery to all intellects except to those whom He has willed among the Prophets and Messengers (a), and this is a place of realization. Intellect ponders and thinks about the creation, and realizes in the soul about the limitness and obedience of laws, and then it deduces the existence of Allah, and realizes the greatness of Him which the intellect cannot understand. Divine Revelation purifies and guides the soul in to a greater understanding of Allah and builds a bond between the servants and the Lord which the intellect cannot discover from the creation, and this bond is worship.

We do understand the concept of Allah's attributes from the creation, through comparisons of the diverse creations as Allah has created them. For example the concept of mercy

we do understand through realization in the soul but not in the rational understanding of the intellect, and this we do when we see mercy in demonstration, such as when we see father kissing the child, the mother feeding the son, the strong helping the oppressed, the husband taking care of his wife, the tiger taking her cub across the river and so on, through the creation we get the idea of mercy then we realize what mercy is, and then we remember Allah who has put these in His creations, how Merciful is He. Like this we understand the concept of seeing, hearing, knowledge, revenge, life, death, sleep, and so on, and when the Divine Words, Holy Quran says something about Allah we either understand it affirmatively through realization in us stating that Allah is Most Merciful Seeing, Wrathful and so on, or negatively, that is Allah doesn't die, doesn't sleep, doesn't eat and so on. In all these cases we haven't compared Allah with His creation, but we only got an idea of the words which are attributed to Allah through different demonstrations and dimensions of created existence. As to Eyes, Face, Saq, Qadam, Hands, Nuzul, and all those which if taken literally resembles Allah with creation there is no way we can understand them from creation even the idea of it because even the slightest amount of idea on the basis of creation resembles Allah with the created unlike other attributes. Other attributes through comparison can be understood on the basis of the verse "There is nothing like un to Him", but these attributes can't be except that we affirm it understanding the "*murad*"(the intended) of the use of these attributes as stated". (Chapter 4: A preacher's handbook)

‘The one who understands religion free from rationalism will not understand it and the one who understands religion purely on basis of rationalism will destroy it and one who understands religion with the balance of rationalism and non-rationalism will understand it as much as Allah wills. The ashaira is the only sect who has been able to have done so and the ashaira as religious sect based on the ashaira as the intellectual sect is the sect who has understood religion properly, Allah willing. Those who name themselves Ash‘arites from the misguided Sufis and other deviant religious sects are sects which are not based on the intellectual Asharism.’(from the book ‘The Wisdom Paragraphs’)

‘We cannot possibly understand Allah's existence in absolutely full sense; neither can we come to explain His essence and attributes in the full sense. Whatever then is between Him and us in relation to His self and our mind then it is always incomplete in perception because of the limit of our mind and limit of our language. What then we need to do when our language is limited yet we want to know about Allah correctly as allowed by our mind? We then form concepts on the basis of multiplicity of language combinations, rather than abiding by a singularity of language. So when Allah wants to express an intended meaning through language, and such language has more than one meaning one used more than other one, yet the intended meaning is the less used one what are we to do? We need to take three steps as stated by the theologians of Ahl Sunnah Wa Jamah the followers of Imam Ashari and they are: understanding context of the language, evidence of

other texts, or analogy. This is only then when the evident meaning of the language if taken will be improper for Allah, such as taking Hand of Allah in the literal sense'. (From the book 'Theological defence of the orthodox creed')

Says Sheikh Nu Ha mim Keller in a lengthy discussion:

'....actual examples of *mutashabihat* or 'unapparent in meaning' Qur'anic verses and hadiths, and examine how the earliest scholars interpreted them:

1. *Forgetting*. We have mentioned above the Qur'anic verse,

"Today We forget you as you have forgotten this day of yours" (Qur'an 45:34),

which the early Muslims used to interpret figuratively, as reported by a scholar who was himself an early Muslim (salafi) and indeed, the sheikh of the early Muslims in Qur'anic exegesis, the hadith master (hafiz) Ibn Jarir al-Tabari who died 310 years after the Hijra, and who explains the above verse as meaning: "'This day, Resurrection Day, We shall forget them,' so as to say, 'We shall *abandon them to their punishment*.'" Now, this is precisely *ta'wil*, or interpretation in other than the verse's ostensive sense. Al-Tabari ascribes this interpretation, through his chains of transmission, to the Companion (Sahabi) Ibn 'Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him) as well as to Mujahid, Ibn 'Abbas's main student in Qur'anic exegesis (*Jami' al-bayan*, 8.202).

2. *Hands*. In the verse,

"And the sky We built with hands; verily We outspread [it]" (Qur'an 51:47),

al-Tabari ascribes the figurative explanation (ta'wil) of *with hands* as meaning "*with power* (bi quwwa)" through five chains of transmission to Ibn 'Abbas, who died 68 years after the Hijra, Mujahid who died 104 years after the Hijra, Qatada [ibn Da'ama] who died 118 years after the Hijra, Mansur [ibn Zadhan al-Thaqafi] who died 131 years after the Hijra, and Sufyan al-Thawri who died 161 years after the Hijra (*Jami' al-bayan*, 27.7–8). I mention these dates to show just how early they *were*.

3. *Shin*. Of the Qur'anic verse,

"On a day when shin shall be exposed, they shall be ordered to prostrate, but be unable" (Qur'an 68:42),

al-Tabari says, "A number of the exegetes of the Companions (Sahaba) and their students (tabi'in) held that it [*a day when shin shall be exposed*] means that *a dire matter* (amrun shadid) *shall be disclosed*" (*Jami' al-bayan*, 29.38)—the *shin's* association with *direness* being that it was customary for Arab warriors fighting in the desert to ready themselves to move fast and hard through the sand in the thick of the fight by lifting the hems of their garments above the shin. This was apparently lost upon later anthropomorphists, who said the verse proved 'Allah has a shin,' or, according to others, 'two shins, since one would be unbecoming.' Al-Tabari also relates from Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd al-Muharibi, who relates from Ibn al-Mubarak, from Usama ibn Zayd, from 'Ikrima, from Ibn 'Abbas that *shin* in the above verse means "*a day of war and direness* (harbin wa shidda)" (ibid., 29.38). All of these

narrators are those of the *sahih* or rigorously authenticated collections except Usama ibn Zayd, whose hadiths are *hasan* or 'well authenticated.'

4. *Laughter*. Of the Hadith related in *Sahih al-Bukhari* from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said,

Allah Most High laughs about two men, one of whom kills the other, but both of whom enter paradise: the one fights in the path of Allah and is killed, and afterwards Allah forgives the killer, and then *he* fights in the path of Allah and is martyred,

The hadith master al-Bayhaqi records that the scribe of Bukhari [Muhammad ibn Yusuf] al-Farabri related that Imam al-Bukhari said, "The meaning of *laughter* in it is *mercy*" (*Kitab al-asma' wa al-sifat*, 298).

5. *Coming*. The hadith master (hafiz) Ibn Kathir reports that Imam al-Bayhaqi related from al-Hakim from Abu 'Amr ibn al-Sammak, from Hanbal, the son of the brother of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's father, that

Ahmad ibn Hanbal figuratively interpreted the word of Allah Most High,

"And your Lord shall come . . ." (Qur'an 89:22),

As meaning "His *recompense* (thawab) shall come."

Al-Bayhaqi said, "This chain of narrators has absolutely nothing wrong in it" (*al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya*, 10.342). In other words, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, like the Companions (Sahaba) and

other early Muslims mentioned above, sometimes also gave figurative interpretations (ta'wil) to scriptural expressions that might otherwise have been misinterpreted anthropomorphically. This was also the way of Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari, founder of the Ash'ari school of Islamic belief, who had two views about the *mutashabihat*, the first being *tafwid*, or 'consigning the knowledge of what is meant to Allah,' and the second being *ta'wil* or 'figurative interpretation' when needed to avoid the suggestion of the anthropomorphism that is explicitly rejected by the Qur'an.

In light of the examples quoted above about such words about Allah as 'forgetting,' 'hands,' 'shin,' 'laughter,' 'coming,' and so forth, it is plain that Muslim scholars of *Aqida*, whether of the Ash'ari school or any other, did not originate *ta'wil* or figurative interpretation, but rather it had been with Muslims from the beginning, because that was the nature of the Arabic language....'

And lastly Holy Quran explicitly confirms the existence of interpretation (ta'weel) of verses such as those which contain words such as Hand of Allah, Face, Saaq ad so on.

'He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its ta'weel, but no one knows its ta'weel meanings except God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding.' (3:7)

This excludes any possibility of having a literal sense (haqeeqi) to them.

Istiwa

Says Dr GF Haddad:

"Istiwa' is one of the Attributes of acts (*min sifat al-af`al*) according to the majority of the explanations." - Al-Qurtubi.

"The establishment of His Throne in the heaven is known, and His Throne in the earth is the hearts of the People of Pure Monotheism (*ahl al-tawhid*). He said: { and eight will uphold the Throne of their Lord that day, above them } (69:17), and [concerning] the throne of the hearts: { We carry them on the land and the sea } (17:70). As for the throne of the heaven: the Merciful established Himself over it (*`alayhi istawa*); and as for the throne of the hearts: the Merciful conquered it (*`alayhi istawla*). The throne of the heaven is the direction of the supplication of creatures, while the throne of the heart is the locus of the gaze of the Real - Most High -. Therefore, there is a huge difference between this throne and that!" - Al-Qushayri. (Lata'if al-Isharat (4:118))

"We believe that {the Merciful established Himself over the Throne } (20:5), and we do not know the reality of the meaning of this nor what is meant by it (*la na`lamu haqiqata mi`na dhalika wa al-murada bihi*), while we do believe that { There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him } (42:11) and that He is exalted far above the most elevated of created things. That is the way of the Salaf or at least their vast majority, and it is the safest because one is not required to probe into such

matters." - Al-Nawawi. (Nawawi, al-Majmu` Sharh al-Muhadhdhab (1:25))

‘Ibn al-Jawzi mentions another reason for permitting this interpretation: "Whoever interprets { and He is with you } (57:4) as meaning ‘He is with you in knowledge,’ permits his opponent to interpret *istiwa’* as ‘subduing’ (*al-qahr*).”³³

As for the linguistic precedent of the meaning *istawla* for *istawa*, it is provided by the poet al-Akhtal (d. 110) who said: "Bishr established mastery over (*istawa`ala*) iraq without sword and without shedding blood." some "Salafis" reject this linguistic proof on the ground that al-Akhtal was a second-century Christian. This shows ignorance of agreed-upon criteria for the probative force of arabic poetry in the *shari`a*, which extends at least to the year 150 and applies regardless of creed’.

‘In complete opposition to the above Ibn Taimiyyah said in his Fatawa: "The establishment of Allah over the Throne is real, and the servant's establishment over the ship is real" (*lillahi ta`ala istiwa'un`ala`arshihi haqiqatan wa li al-`abdi istiwa'un`ala al-fulki haqiqatan*)’ (Ibn Taimiyyah, Majmu` al-Fatawa, Vol. 5 entitled al-Asma' wa al-Sifat (5:199))

‘The anthropomorphists (*al-jismiyya*) said: "Its meaning is settledness (*al-istiqrar*).’ (Aqeedah Wasatiyya)

Says Dr G.F Haddad:

‘IBN AL-`ARABI'S REFUTATION

'....firmly rejected by Ibn al-`Arabi in his commentary on the Hadith of descent in al-Tirmidhi:

Some ignorant people have trespassed bounds in interpreting this Hadith, claiming there is proof in it that Allah "is in the Heaven, on the Throne, above the seven heavens." We say that this is a sign of tremendous ignorance.

What the Hadith said is "He descends to Heaven" without specifying from where He descends or how He descends. Yet they said - and their proof is, again, based on the literal sense - {The Merciful established Himself over the Throne} (20:4).

We ask: What is the Throne in Arabic, and what is *istawa*?

They reply: As Allah said: "*That you may mount upon (tastawu) their backs, and may remember your Lord's favor when you mount (istawaytum) thereon*" (43:13).

We say: Allah is Mighty and Higher than to have His *istiwa'* on His Throne compared to our sitting on the backs of animals.

They say: "*And as He said: And it (the ship) came to rest (istawat) upon (the mount) al-Judi*" (11:44).

We say: Allah is Mighty and Higher than a ship that sailed and then docked and stopped.

They said: "*And as He said: And when you are on board (istawayta) the ship, you and whoso is with you*" (23:28).

We say: Allah forbids that His *istiwa'* be similar to that of Noah and his people. Everything in the latter case is created,

as it consists in *istiwa'* with an elevation and a settling in a place involving physical contact. The entire Umma is in agreement, even before hearing the hadith of descent and the arguments of those who rejected it, that Allah's *istiwa'* does not involve any of those things. Therefore do not give examples from His creation for Him!...

They say: Allah said: *"He rules all affairs from the Heaven to the Earth"* (32:5).

We say: This is true, but it does not provide any proof for your innovation.

They say: All the firm believers in the Oneness of Allah raise their hands to the Heavens when supplicating him, and if Musa had not said to Pharaoh: "My Lord is in the Heaven," Pharaoh would not have said: *"O Haman... set up for me a lofty tower in order that I may survey the god of Moses"* (28:38).

We say: You are lying about Musa (as), he never said that. But your conclusion shows that you are indeed the followers of Pharaoh, who believed that the Creator lies in a certain direction, and so he desired to climb up to Him on a ladder. He congratulates you for being among his followers, and he is your imam.

They say: What about Umayya ibn Abi al-Salt who said: "Glory to Him Whom creatures are unable to know in the way He deserves to be known, Who is on His Throne, One and One Alone, Sovereign and Possessor over the Throne of Heaven, unto Whose Majesty faces are humbled and prostrate"? And he - Umayya - had read the Torah, the Bible, and the Psalms.

We say: It is just like you, in your ignorance, to cite as proof, first Pharaoh, then the discourse of a pre-Islamic Arab supported by the Torah and the Bible, which have been distorted and changed. Of all of Allah's creation the Jews are the most knowledgeable in disbelief and in likening Allah to creation.

What we must believe is that Allah existed and nothing existed with Him; that He created all creation, including the Throne, without becoming subject to disclosure through them, nor did a direction arise for Him because of them, nor did He acquire a location in them; that He does not become immanent, that He does not cease to be transcendent, that he does not change, and that He does not move from one state to another.

Istiwa' in the Arabic language has fifteen meanings both literal and figurative. Some of these meanings are suitable for Allah and the meaning of the verse (20:4) is derived from them. The other meanings are not accepted under any circumstances. For example, if it is taken to mean being fixed in a place (*tamakkun*), settling (*istiqrar*), connecting (*ittisal*), or being bounded (*muhadhat*): then none of these are suitable for the Creator Almighty and Exalted and no-one should try to find His likeness in His creation.

One may refrain from explaining the verse, as Malik and others have said: "*Istiwa'* is known" - he means: its lexical sense- "and its modality is unknown" (*wa al-kayfu majhul*)- that is: the modality of whatever is suitable for Allah among the senses of *istiwa'*: therefore who can specify such modality? - "and asking about it is innovation" - because, as

we have just made clear, probing this matter is looking for dubious matters and that is asking for *fitna*.

Hence, from what the Imam of Muslims Malik has said, we can conclude that the *istiwa'* is known; that what is suitable for Allah is left unspecified; and that He is declared transcendent above what is impossible for Him. As for specifying what is not suitable for Him, it is not permissible for you, since you have completed the declaration of oneness and belief by negating likeness for Allah and by negating whatever it is absurd to believe concerning Him. There is no need for anything beyond that, and we have already explained this in detail.

To conclude it should be said that, just as the salafis say to us 'istila' (taking over), cannot be done except by using might and force with other opposite, and Allah is in no need of using a fight to take over so, this meaning is rejected. Well it can be rejected that one can take over without a fight, and also which is more befitting to Allah's Majesty, the term 'istiqrar' or 'istila'? The latter because the former is outright tajseem (embodiment), so we take the higher meaning and Allah says 'For Allah is the highest parable'.

Nuzul

'Our Lord - Blessed and Exalted is He! - descends every night to the lowest heaven in the last third of the night and says: Who is supplicating Me so that I may answer him? Who is asking forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him?'
(Narrated from Abu Hurayra by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Malik, and al-Darimi. It is narrated from

twenty-three Companions, as stated by al-Kattani in *Nazm al-Mutanathir*.)

Says Dr G.F Haddad:

'Abu al-Walid al-Baji stated in his commentary of Malik's *Muwatta'*:

The Prophet's -- Allah bless and greet him -- saying that our Exalted Lord descends every night to the nearest heaven is to inform us that supplication at that particular time is answered, petitioners are given what they request, and those who ask for forgiveness are forgiven. It warns us as to the great merit of that time and strongly encourages us to make abundant supplication, petition, and contrition at that time. It was narrated from the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- in similar terms that Allah Almighty and Exalted said: "If My servant comes near Me one hand-span I come near him one cubit. If he comes near Me one cubit I come near him an arm's length. If he comes to Me walking, I come to him running." He did not mean by this hadith a coming-near in terms of distance, for such is impossible and inexistent. All he meant was the servant's coming-near in terms of good works, and Allah's coming-near in terms of answer and acceptance. In the same sense one says "So-and-so is near So-and-so," and they say of the leader "He is near his people" if he helps them a lot and welcomes them. This is well-known in the language of the Arabs.' (Al-Baji, *al-Muntaqa* (1:357))

'In sum the hadith is interpreted in two ways: the first is: His command or His angel descends; the second is: it is a metaphor for His regard for supplicants, His answering them, and so forth.

Abu Bakr ibn Furak has said that some of the masters have read it *yunzilu* - "He sends down" - instead of *yanzilu* - "He descends" - that is, He sends down an angel. This is strengthened by al-Nasa'i's narration through al-Aghurr from Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri: "Allah waits until the first part of the night is over, then He orders a herald to say: Is there anyone supplicating so that he may be answered?...'" (Narrated from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurayra by al-Nasa'i in *al-Sunan al-Kubra* (6:124 #10316) and *`Amal al-Yawm wa al-Layla* (ed. Faruq Hammada p. 340 #482). Al-Qari declared it sound in *Mirqat al-Mafatih* (1994 ed. 3:299).)

'Al-Khattabi in his commentary on Abu Dawud also states:

'This [hadith] belongs to the knowledge in whose outward expression we have been ordered to believe and not seek to disclose its inward sense. It is one of the many ambiguities (*mutashabih*) which Allah has mentioned in His book'

(Al-Khattabi, *Ma'alim al-Sunan* (Hims ed. 5:101).)

As has been stated above that the Holy Quran explicitly confirms the existence of interpretation (ta'weel) of verses such as those which contain words such as Hand of Allah, Face, Saaq ad so on, but best is to remain silent except in the face of innovation and ignorance.

Says Dr G.F Haddad:

'noitatufer sibarA nbl

'...As for the phrases: "He descends, He comes, He arrives," and similar ones whose meanings it is impermissible to apply to His Essence: they refer to His actions... Al-Awza'i explained this when he said, about this hadith: "Allah does what he wishes." (Also related from Ishaq ibn Rahuyah as narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *al-Asma' wa al-Sifat* (2:375-376 #951) and al-Dhahabi in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluw* (p. 191 #234) and the *Siyar* (9:558 #1877); Fudayl ibn 'Iyad as related from al-Athram by Bukhari in *Khalq Af'al al-'Ibad* (p. 14); Yahya ibn Ma'in as cited by Lalika'i in *Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunna*. The latter two are cited by Ibn Taymiyya in *Majmu'a al-Fatawa* (5:377).)

It suffices to know or simply to believe that Allah is not to be defined by any of the characteristics of creatures and that there is nothing in His creation that resembles Him and no interpretation that can explain Him.

They said: We must say "He descends" without asking how. We say: We seek refuge in Allah from asking how! We only say whatever Allah's Messenger -- Allah bless and greet him -- has taught us to say and what we have understood from the Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed. And the Prophet said: "Allah says: O My servant, I was ailing and you did not visit me, I was hungry and you did not feed me, I was thirsty and you did not give me drink..." (Narrated from Abu Hurayra by Muslim and Ahmad.)

None of this is suitable of Allah whatsoever, but He has honored all these actions by expressing them through Him. In the same way, the saying "Our Lord descends" expresses that His servant and angel descends in His name with His order pertaining to whatever He bestows of His Mercy, gives out of His generosity, and showers His creation out of His bounty.

The poet says:

I have descended - therefore do not suspect me of jealousy! - in the station of the generous lover. (The scholars also often quote al-Shafi'i's saying that when he first arrived in Egypt they did not understand him, whereupon "I descended, and descended, and descended until they understood me.")

A descent can be either figurative or physical. The descending that Allah spoke about, if understood as physical, would mean His angel, Messenger, and slave. However, if you can understand it to mean that He was not doing any of this and that He then turned to do it in the last third of the night, thereby answering prayers, forgiving, bestowing, and that He has named this "descending from one degree to another and from one attribute to another," then that - ironically - is addressed to those who have more knowledge than you and more intelligence, who are firmer in belief in Allah's Unity and are less confused than you - nay, who are not confused at all! (Imam Malik said: "It is our Lord's command which descends." Narrated by Ibn `Abd al-Barr himself in *al-Tamhid* (7:143) from Mutarrif with a sound chain. He then admits: "It is possible that the matter be as Malik said, and Allah knows best.")

They say in ignorance that if He meant the descending of his Mercy he would not make that only in the last third of the night, because His Mercy descends day and night. We say: Yes, he singled out the night, and the day of `Arafa, and the hour of Jum`a, because the descent of His mercy in them is more abundant, and its bestowal is even greater then. Allah told us of this when He said: "*And those who beg forgiveness in the early hours of the morning*" (3:17)' (Ibn al-`Arabi, *Arida al-Ahwadhi* (2:234-237)

“Where is Allah” Hadeeth

Allah states in Holy Quran: "and He is Allah in heavens and in earth...(6:3)

The Tafseer of this verse according to the Mufasssireen is "and He is Allah worshipped in the heavens and in the earth". Why then we are not taking it in the literal sense adding the word "bila kayf", that is Allah is in the heavens and in the earth "bila kayf" (without howness), as the rejecters of Ash`arism says to the hadeeth about the slave girl and the verse "Allah alal arsh istawa", why can't we take a meaning for these two as has been stated by the Ash`arites? Why do you choose places where to take in the haqiqi sense (literal) and where not? In fact the hadeeth of Bukhari also doesn't mention for Allah a place when Prophet (saas) said in Hadeeth Bukhari " Allah was and there was nothing beside Him and His throne was on water"

Notice that Allah's Throne was on water then also Allah states that Allah is on the throne "istiwa". If we say His throne (which is created) meaning His dominion (by the creation of the throne, then it fits both the places, i.e. His first dominion on water then on the entire creation after creation as Allah states in Holy Quran "We made from water every living thing, will they not then believe?" (Al-Anbiya: 30). This is sounder than saying Allah setting Himself on the water on His throne first then on the heavens on His throne. It may also be that He created His Throne on water just as He created His house Ka'ba, so just as He doesn't have to reside in it so too he doesn't have to sit Himself on the throne. Also has been narrated by Abu Mansur Baghdadi from Imam Ali (ra) that "Allah created the throne as a manifestation of His power, and didn't take it as a place to reside for Himself".

As to the hadeeth of the slave girl,

Muawiyah bin Al-Hakam As-Salmi said:

"I had a slave-girl who used to herd sheep for me. One day I discovered that a wolf had killed one of her sheep, and I'm a man from the children of Adam, I get upset like they get upset, and I slapped her in the face. Then I went to the Prophet who impressed upon me the seriousness of my act. I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, should I not set her free?' He said, 'Bring her to me.' He asked her, 'Where is Allah', She

said, 'He is above the heavens.' He said, 'Who am I?' She said, 'You are the Messenger of Allah.' He said, 'Free her, for she is a believer.' (Muslim and Abu Dawud)

Says Dr. G.F Haddad:

"Nawawi said in his commentary on Muslim (Kitab 5 Bab 7 Hadith 33):

This is from among the Hadiths that deal with Allah's attributes and there are two schools of reading for it... The first consists in believing in it without entering into its meaning, while holding that there is nothing like unto Allah, with His elevation above the characteristics of things created. The second consists in interpreting it with what befits Him.

Whoever holds the latter position says that the meaning of the tradition is that the Prophet intended to test her: was she a believer in oneness (*muwahhida*) who confirms that the Creator, Disposer, and Doer is Allah alone? that He it is Who, when the petitioner invokes Him, he turns towards the heaven, and when the worshipper prays, he turns towards the Ka`ba? -- and this is not because He is circumscribed in the heaven, just as this is not because He is circumscribed in the direction of the Ka`ba; rather this is because the heaven is the orientation of those who invoke, just as the Ka`ba is the orientation of those who pray -- or, on the other hand, was she of the idol-worshippers who worship the idols that are in front of them? When she replied: "In heaven," it was

understood that she was a believer in oneness and not an idol-worshipper.

Qadi `Iyad said:

"There is no disagreement among the Muslims, all without exception: their jurists, scholars of hadith, theologians, keen-sighted ones, and imitators, that the external meanings cited pertaining to Allah being "in the heaven" -- as in His saying: "Have you taken security from Him Who is in the Heaven that He will not cause the earth to swallow you?" (67:16) and the like -- are not as they appear (*laysat `ala zahiriha*) but rather are interpreted by all of the scholars (*muta'awwila `inda jami`ihim*). He among the Muhaddithin, fuqaha' and Mutakallimun who spoke to establish that there is aboveness in direction without specifying dimension or modality : he did so only by interpreting "in the heaven" (*fi al-sama'*) to mean "above the heaven" (*`ala al-sama'*). And of the great multitude of the keen-sighted ones and theologians and those who establish Allah's freedom from any likeness to creation who spoke to negate the concept of limit and the inconceivability of direction with relation to Allah: they did so only by interpreting with various figurative interpretations, according to the necessity of each case.

Qadi `Iyad continues, "Some of them practiced mutual tolerance in the matter of establishing a direction for Allah (i.e. they did the latter to some extent), but only with apprehension at such tolerance: for is there any difference between asking "how" and establishing directions for Allah? However, whatever generalization the Law has made such as about Allah being the Omnipotent over (*fawqa*) His slaves and His establishing Himself over (*`ala*) the Throne, it is always with strong adherence (*tamassuk*) to the verse which sums up the total transcendence (*al-tanzih al-kulli*) of Allah

above creation, "There is nothing like unto Him," without which nothing of what is conceived in the mind is sound. Such adherence is perfect protection for him to whom Allah the Exalted grants success." And this, says Nawawi, is the end of Qadi `Iyad's discourse."

`Ali al-Qari said in his commentary on *Mishkat al-masabih* in relation to the hadith "Where is Allah?":

Al-Qadi `Iyad said: "By asking this, the Prophet's intent was not to ask about Allah's place (makan), for verily He is above and beyond space, as He is above and beyond time. Rather the intent of his question to her was to find out whether she was a believer in oneness (muwahhida) or someone who associated partners to Allah (mushrika), because the unbelievers (kuffar) of the Arabs used to worship idols, and each tribe used to have a specific idol in its midst which it worshipped and aggrandized, and it may be that the simple-minded and ignorant ones among them did not know any other object of worship than that idol. The Prophet therefore meant to determine what she worshipped. When she said: "in the heaven," -- and another narration says that she made a sign towards the heaven -- it was understood that she was a believer in oneness. He meant by this line of questioning the disavowal of the gods of the earth (nafi al-aliha al-ardiyya) which are the idols, not the establishment of the heaven as a location for Allah, and Allah is greatly exalted from the sayings of the wrong-doers!"

Kalam

“It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise.” (42:51)

Here in this verse Allah states that inspiration (wahi), or from behind a veil, or through sending messengers, can be called as speaking (kalâm), which rules out the possibility that kalâm only consists of letters and sounds. Thus Kalam of Allah is not meaning kalâm with letters and sounds.

The Ash'arites position

“They (the Asharites) made a distinction between the outward and concrete expression of the Qur'an in language, and the real, self-subsistent meaning of it, and held that the Qur'an, as expressed in words and sounds, is, no doubt, temporal (*hadath*); but against the Mu'tazilites they asserted that the Qur'an in its meanings is uncreated and eternal. The "self-subsisting meaning" eternally inheres in the essence of God. These meanings are expressed; their expression in language is temporal and created. It is so because the same meaning, while remaining the same, might be expressed differently at different times, in different places by different persons or nations. They further maintained that this meaning is an attribute other than knowledge and will and, as such, inheres eternally in the essence of God and is, therefore, eternal.

(i) The Qur'an is "knowledge from God"; it is, therefore, inseparable from God's attribute of knowledge which is

eternal and uncreated. Hence it is also eternal and uncreated.

(ii) God created everything by His word *kun* (be) and this word, which is in the Qur'an, could not have been a created one, otherwise a created word would be a creator, which is absurd. Hence God's word is uncreated, i. e. Eternal.

(iii) The Qur'an makes a distinction between creation (*khalq*) and command (*amr*) when It says, "Are not the creation and command His alone?" Hence God's Command, His word or *Kalam*, which is definitely something other than created things (*makhluq*), must be uncreated and eternal.

(iv) Further, God says to Moses, "I have chosen thee over mankind with My apostolate and My word." This verse signifies that God has speech. Again, Moses is addressed by God with the words: "Lo, I am thy Lord." Now, if the word which addresses Moses is a created thing, it would mean that a created thing asserts that it is Moses Lord (God), which is absurd. God's word, therefore, must be eternal. The Ash'arites further pointed out that all the different arguments advanced by the Mu'tazilites (and in *Sharh-i Mawaqif* as many as eight such arguments have been mentioned), in support of their view that the Qur'an is created, would apply only to the expressed Qur'an and not to the real Qur'an, the latter being the "meanings of the Qur'an." (Ash'arism by M. Abdul Hye, M.A, Ph.D)

Says Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamid Ali:

"...comments of Sheikh Ibrâhîm ibn Muhammad Al-Bayjûrî.
He says:

"And know that the phrase 'Kalâm Allah' (Allah's Word or Speech) is applied to the beginningless unuttered speech (*kalâm nafsî qadîm*), which happens to be a quality (*sifah*) present with His being (*dhat*) High is He; just as it is a phrase applied to the uttered speech (*kalâm lafzî*), which happens to be a reference to His creation (i.e. the physical book) while no one has played a part in the origin of its composition. And according to this (second) application, the statement of Our Lady 'Âisha is understood when she said:

"All between the two covers of the book (*mushaf*) is Allah's word (*kalâm Allah*) High is He."

And it (i.e. the expression) is applied to both meanings (i.e. the Book and to the eternal quality of Allah). It has also been stated that the phrase is a homonym (*ishtirâk*); just as it has been said that it literally applies to the unuttered (uncreated) speech, while it is metaphorically applied to the uttered (created) speech.

(At any rate) All who deny that all that is between the two covers of the book (*mushaf*) is the word of Allah (*kalâm Allah*) are guilty of unbelief unless one means that it is not the quality present with His divine essence High is He. And in spite of the fact that the words (*lafz*) we recite happen to be emergent, it is still only permitted to say "The Qur'ân is emergent (or created)" in a classroom setting, because it sometimes applies to the quality present with His divine

essence even though only metaphorically according to the strongest view. And it might be imagined from stating in a general fashion that "The Qur'ān is emergent (or created)" that (one is saying that) the quality present with His divine essence High is He is emergent (or created)."

Ibn Hajar makes clear what his position is on the matter. He says,

"As for the letters – if they happen to be the movements of tools, like the tongue and lips, they are non-essential characteristics and accidents [indicative of createdness] (‘arād). And if they (the letters) are in writing, they are composite bodies and objects (ajsām). But the existence of composite bodies and accidents in Allah’s being – High is He – is impossible. And it is a necessary result of those who affirm that [they can be present with His essence] that he adopts the view that the Qur’ān is created while (in the same breath) denying such a thing and fleeing away from it. So that compelled some of them to claim the uncreatedness of the letter as the Sālimiyya adopted. And others adopted the view that they (the letters) are present in His being.

And resulting from the extreme confusion that happened in the issue, the Salaf’s prohibition against indulging in it happened much. And they found it sufficient to believe that the Qur’ān is Allah’s word uncreated (al-Qur’ān kalām Allah ghayru makhlūq). And they didn’t add anything to that. And it is the safest of all views. And Allah is the One sought for aid."

So it becomes clear that the true position of the Salaf was to limit themselves to saying, 'The Qur'an is Allah's word uncreated.' As for stating that they are composed of letters

and sounds or not, this was a later development in Islamic history. So it is sufficient for one to limit his/her statements to the same that the Salaf limited themselves to.

[Fath Al-Bārī 15/465-467].”

As to the matter of Tawhid: The salafis have divided Tawhid in to three types: Tawhid Rububiyya, Tawhid asma wa sifat and Tawhid ulyuhiyya. Firstly the prophet (saas) didn't divide this, and neither did the companions and neither the generation after them. The salafis are always bringing this excuse to refute their opponents' claim which is 'what the first three generations didn't do in religion we won't do' but they seem to have invented three types of Tawhid when Prophet (saas) called for the Tawhid of Allah 'making Allah the sole Lord'. So it suffices to say that one who believes in Tawhid Rububiyya is having the correct Tawhid. As to the verses which relate the belief of the pagans as Allah being the Higher Lord then this is not Tawhid Rububiyya but only Rububiyya of Allah among other Rububiyya of idols. The salafis haven't understood Tawhid then. Also I would like to say that one who believes that Allah is the true God worthy of worship and Prophet Muhammad (saas) is His messenger then, he/she has believed in Allah. The salafis may say that many Christians believe in God, as well as many Jews and pagans, but they do believe in God as Creator, which doesn't mean Tawhid Rububiyya, but part of Rububiyya of Allah, so when we say Tawhid (it means making Allah one) in Rububiyya (Lordship), then it is enough and inclusive for worship and knowledge about Allah's names and attributes. How can you make Allah one when you do not know Him

correctly and do not worship Him? So the non-Muslims may believe in the Lordship of Allah (God), but they haven't believed in His unity of Lordship.(from the book "The Theological defence of the orthodox creed)

Aqeedah of true salafs (early Muslims of the first three generations Hijri)

Says Imam Ghazzali:

‘...proceed...You have asked me (may Allah give you right guidance) about the reports that give the impression of there being resemblance [between Allah and His creation] to the hooligans (ra_a) and fools among the deviant crpto-anthropomorphists (Hashwiyya)¹, whereas they have believed about Allah and His attributes things that He is high beyond and sanctified from having—such as “the form,” the “hand,” the “mouth,” “the foot,” “the descent,” “the transference from place to place,” the “sitting on the Throne and the establishment,” and other things of a like nature that they have adopted from the literal indications of the reports and the physical forms they depict. [You asked about the fact that] they have claimed that what they believe in this regard is the belief of the Salaf, thus I wanted to explain to you what the belief of the Salaf was, in order to clarify what is compulsory for the general masses of people to believe about the reports. This will remove the veil that is obscuring the truth with respect to it, and distinguish between what must be studied and looked for, and what must be abstained and refrained from indulging in. For this, I have answered your request, seeking closeness to Allah , by revealing the

unequivocal truth without any flattery, [without] observing a [particular] side [in the debate], and [without] maintaining any partisan bias toward any adherent of a particular mazhab—since the truth is more deserving of observation, and truthfulness and impartiality are more deserving of preservation. I ask Allah _ for straightness and success----and He is [most] fit for answering he who calls on Him. Now, I will arrange the book into three chapters: [1] a chapter explaining the reality of the mazhab of the Salaf with regard to these reports; [2] a chapter concerning the proof indicating that the truth in its regard is the mazhab of the Salaf and that he who acts contrary to them is an innovator; and [3] a chapter with respect to [a number of] useful scattered sections related to this matter’

CHAPTER 1

THE CREED OF THE SALAF REGARDING ALLEGORICAL REPORTS

Know that the unequivocal truth, over which there is no dispute between those possessing inner discernment, is [in] the approach of the Salaf (mazhab al-Salaf)—meaning the approach of the Companions and the Successors. Now, let me illustrate that along with its proofs, I proceed. The reality of the approach of the Salaf—which is the truth in our view—is that any layperson who confronts one of these controversial

ambiguous Hadiths is obliged to conform to seven matters: [1] Exoneration; [2] Affirmation; [3] Acknowledgement of one's inability; [4] Silence; [5] Abstinence; [6] Restraint; and then [7] Yielding to the People of Knowledge. As for exoneration (taqdis), by this I mean [that a person is] to absolve the Lord, Glory and Highness be to Him, from bodily characteristics and the subordinate characters [of a body]. As for affirmation (tasdiq), this is to believe in what he (the Prophet) (saas) said, that what he mentioned is truth, that he is truthful in whatever he says, and that it is truth in accord with what he said and intended. As for acknowledging one's inability (al-i_tiraf bi al-'ajz), this is for one to acknowledge that knowing his (i.e. the Prophet's & Allah's) intent is beyond the scope of one's capacity, and that such a thing is not any of his business or profession. As for silence (sukut), this is to not ask about its meaning, not to indulge in it, to know that asking about it is an illicit innovation (bid_a), that by indulging in it one is bringing serious risk to his faith, and that he is on the verge of rejecting faith by indulging in it without knowing. As for abstinence (al-imsak), this is for him not to alter or replace those expressions with another language, not to add or subtract from it, or by combining or separating [any words]. Rather, one is only to utter that particular expression or word in that particular manner of mention, grammatical classification, declension, and wording. As for restraint (al-kaff), this is to keep one's heart from searching and pondering over it. As for yielding to its specialists (al-taslim li ahlihi), this is for one not to believe that just because such a thing is confusing to him due to his inability, that it was also confusing to Allah's messenger (saas), to the prophets, to the truly sincere in faith (Siddiqin), or the friends of God (awliya'). So these are seven protocols that every single one of the Salaf believed to be an obligation of all lay people—and it

should not be thought that the Salaf—disagreed about any part of that. (translated version: A return to purity in creed by Imam Ghazzali)

1 This term was applied to some of the Hanbali scholars like those who Ibn al-Jawzi rebutted in his *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbih*, like Qadi Abu Ya'la, Ibn Hamid, and Ibn Zaghuni. It also applies to anyone who adopts a similar creed as those who say that Allah has a hand unlike hands, an eye unlike eyes, and a foot unlike feet. This is just as the blatant Anthropomorphists said, "Allah is a body unlike bodies."

To conclude is to state here what Sheikh Nuh said:

"... In light of the above examples, it is plain that the Ash'ari school did not originate figurative interpretation, but rather it had been with Muslims from the beginning. And if the above figures are not the *salaf* or 'early Muslims,' who are? Ibn Taymiya (d. 728/1328) and Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350)?

The question of *ta'wil* or 'figurative interpretation' is the reason that our "reformers" refer to Ash'aris (as did Ibn Taymiya and Ibn al-Qayyim did before them) as *Jahmiyya*, or 'Jahmites,' after Jahm ibn Safwan (d. 128/745), an extreme Mu'tazilite who denied that Allah had any attributes. Or as *Nafat*, or 'Negaters,' meaning of the 'attributes' they would infer from verbs and ascriptive (*idafa*) constructions of the above type of *mutashabihat*, or 'unapparent in meaning' verses and hadiths that we have discussed. Despite the

inaccuracy of these labels, which beg the question that the *mutashabihat* signify attributes, one cannot doubt the sincerity with which these people advocate their "return to early Islam." Yet, in view of the foregoing examples of figurative interpretation by early Muslims, one cannot help feeling entitled to ask, Whose early Islam would they have us return to?"

Part II

Theological defence of the orthodox creed

1) Know this that attributes is divided in to Sifat manawi (attribute of meaning), and Sifat hissi (Attribute of physicality). Attribute of meaning is that which can have a limit and which cannot have a limit, such as limited power or unlimited power, limited life or eternal life. Such attribute is related to Allah with the unlimited sense and its effect we see in the manifestation of creation. While there are attributes of physicality such as hand, eyes, ears etc, and such attributes can have a defect such as broken hand, or pierced eye, such attributes are embodied and liable to laws of creation and division, which if applied to Allah will make Him limited and bounded by His own laws. Thus such attributes when applied to Allah is to be interpreted, such as Hand of Allah meaning power or mercy or help etc.

2) The salafis state that the istiwa of Allah on throne is in

the literal sense, and stated also by sheikh ibn Taymiyyah that istiwa meaning istiqaarra (settlement). Now Allah encourages us to think about the creation and after thinking about the creation man has come to the conclusion that the earth is not flat but somewhat round shaped and if we hold the view of the salafis that Allah is on the Throne above the heavens in the literal sense then it seems Allah's throne is round as each man on earth would see Allah's Throne as being above where as earth is not flat. It seems the salafis have given Allah a circular shape! Glory is to Allah from what the minds of the salafis think of Him as being. We can then say that the greatness of Allah suggests that istiwa is not on the literal sense as istiqaarra.

3) We must remember that the mazhabs are based on Usool and Qawaid (rules and principles) which we cannot ignore, and each mazhab have its own harmonious ways of usools, then returning to Holy Quran and Sunnah would mean taking one of these mazhabs and living by it respecting each other's legal differences, thus any one denies following a mazhab is harming Islam from within. It should be noted that Islam respects and allows freedom of legal opinions based on evidences whether textual or rational, as long as such differences do not contradict a text of Holy Quran, or an established Sunna whose authenticity is decisive (Qati), and such textual evidences must have no place of taweel. In this way in harmony among our legal differences and mazhabs can we live, Allah, willing. The proof is the story of Banu Quraizah. Also, Allah says in holy Quran that the people of

ignorance will ask the people of knowledge. People of knowledge are those who understand holy Quran and Sunnah. Understanding of holy Quran and Sunnah is both direct and explicit (Nass, haqeeqi) or it has indirect intents and certain possibilities (Zahir, Mujmal, Taweel). People of knowledge differ on the latter and people of ignorance cannot have access to the latter except without learning. When people of knowledge differs in to variant sayings each with their proves, then there comes views, where some accepts view so and so while another group accepts so and so, and thus a mazhab appears. So agreement and acceptance of a certain interpretation by a certain group of scholars makes a mazhab in this view, and when such scholars agrees and accepts on many more views a complete vibrant mazhab appears. The people of ignorance must follow either one of the mazhab existing, and all Mujtahid (people of knowledge), are rewarded, in case of right or wrong. This is another way of seeing it.

4) The theology of Ashari is defensive and negative ensuring that Allah doesn't resemble creation and this is a defence of God's Highness, where as the theology of the today salafis is positive and affirmative not drawing the line between the creation and Creator thereby making it difficult for the general masses to digest the concept of Creator. The belief of the early theologians among Tabeeen and Companions was in the general norm that of belief in what

Allah has affirmed His self without adding the word Haqiqi (literal), even though some companions were well versed about Allah's Names and attributes such as Ali, Ibn Abbas, and has been reported from some salaf (previous scholars) of doing taweel (interpreting). So ponder well modern day salafis.

5) There is a difference between Aqeedah of Salafs and Aqeedah salafi. The position of Salaf for example regarding attributes of Allah was that of keeping quiet and abstinence without adding to it any new concept, so for example Imam Malik said about istiwa that it is known, but howness unknown. 'Known' because Holy Quran informed us about it and howness unknown because Holy Quran hasn't made it evident. But the Aqeedah salafi states that the howness is in the sense of istiqarra (fixed oneself after movement), and known in the sense of haqiqi (literal). Is this what Aqeedah of Salafs shows? In the face of such anthromorphism, interpretation is a necessity, as is done by the orthodox Islam the Ahl Sunnah (people of the Sunnah) i.e the Ash'arites.

6) The salafis have divided Tawhid in to three types: Tawhid Rububiyya, Tawhid asma wa sifat and Tawhid Uluhiyya. Firstly the prophet (saas) didn't divide this, and neither did the companions and neither the generation after them. The salafis are always bringing this excuse to refute their opponents' claim which is 'what the first three generations didn't do in religion we won't do' but they seem to have invented three types of Tawhid when Prophet (saas) called for the Tawhid of Allah 'making Allah the sole Lord'. So it suffices to say that one who believes in Tawhid Rububiyya is having the correct Tawhid. As to the verses which relate the belief of the pagans as Allah being the Higher Lord then

this is not Tawhid Rububiyya but only Rububiyya of Allah among other Rububiyya of idols. The salafis haven't understood Tawhid then. Also I would like to say that one who believes that Allah is the true God worthy of worship and Prophet Muhammad (saas) is His messenger then, he/she has believed in Allah. The salafis may say that many Christians believe in God, as well as many Jews and pagans, but they do believe in God as Creator, which doesn't mean Tawhid Rububiyya, but part of Rububiyya of Allah, so when we say Tawhid (it means making Allah one) in Rububiyya (Lordship), then it is enough and inclusive for worship and knowledge about Allah's names and attributes. How can you make Allah one when you do not know Him correctly and do not worship Him? So the non-Muslims may believe in the Lordship of Allah (God), but they haven't believed in His unity of Lordship. So think deeply O salafis, and do not invent in Islam anything new.

7) The salafis deny that the mutashabihat verses have taweel where as Allah states in Holy Quran it has taweel in 3:7, then how come we take such verses such as hands, eyes, saq, face on the literal sense thereby denying taweel? In fact the salafi way of taking attributes falls under the verse 'As to those in whose hearts is a confusion follows that which is resembling to...(tashabaha minhu...) (3:7).

8) You people claim for Allah hand, feet, shin, laughter, eyes and face and so on in the literal sense thereby making Him limited and making it possible for the idrak Al-mahdud (Perception of the limited), where as Allah states that vision cannot perceive Him. Unlike His other attributes such as Will, Mercy, Sight, Power, Life and so on, which if attributed to Allah can be attributed without any limitation.

9) You people say that just as we say Allah has eyes or face in the literal sense so do you (the Ashairas) say Allah has mercy, will and power which human also posses, thus you (Ashairas) also do tashbeeh. We refute these ignorant people. Ibn Khaldun in his book Muqaddam states that Ashairas divide attributes in to attributes of perfection and attributes of imperfection. To Allah all attributes of perfection are attributed such as being Most Merciful, Willing whatever He wills, Power without a limit and so on, unlike attributes such as eyes, hands, face etc which innately forms the idea of a limited God, thus either you interpret such attributes so it do not limit Allah or you do not interpret thereby limiting Allah, but know this Allah is not limited by any limitations. Also some attributes are perfect in relation to man and those same attributes are imperfect in relation to Allah, such as hands. If a man loses his hands he is not a perfect physical man, but if Allah is said to be having hands in literal sense then, it is imperfection from Allah, as hands are things which are showing need for the possessor, and Allah doesn't need hands to work, because He is not limited. Also we know the reality of hands, eyes, face, shin, laughter, sitting, whose foundation is embodiment and movement, composition and division, interdependency of atoms and molecules and so on, unlike mercy, will, power etc whose reality we do not know in itself except in relation to the expresser of such, so man is powerful is different from saying, the weapon is powerful, which is different from saying God is powerful. We only know such things in relation to the expression from the expresser, a manifestation which has no common uniting factor for such abstract attributes such as mercy, will, power, life etc, thus when we say God is Powerful, Willing, Living and so on we do not make a similarity with the creation, because there is

nothing on which basis similarity can be made, so know this well O salafis.

10) You salafis call us as negators of attributes of Allah but know this we haven't negated His attributes but by His mercy we have not attributed Allah with limited attributes, and we interpreted such to take away the limitations. Know this that no interpretation can really deny Allah's attributes or names because we can only have an interpretation of attributes or names only when we believe in that name or attribute, thus interpretation of something cannot be based on it being non-existent.

11) Know this O salafis that indeed some attributes of Allah can't be said to be possessed by the created existence even in the smallest sense. We say Allah is Most Merciful and also it is possible to say that person is merciful without the prefix "most", but is it possible to say that man has created this thing just as Allah has created this thing, or Allah is eternal and never sleeps, whereas man is not eternal and sleeps? Some attributes are thus solely for Allah, such as Creator, and Eternal (Living), just as some attributes are solely for creation such as hands, face and legs. No other thing in existence even shares these two attributes even in the partial sense. If you say that 'we too say that Allah has hands or face unlike humans' but do you say that Allah has these without a bodily composition? If you say no then this is tajseem (embodiment of Allah), which is kufr but if you say yes then you have said what we have said, that He has hands and face and so on with a certain meaning except that we have interpreted such meaning to understand the Holy Texts such as "Wherever you turn your face you get the face of Allah" (Al Quran), or "Allah's Hand is over their Hands" (Al Quran) and so on.

12) Ibn Taimiyyah suggests that there is no majaz in language (Arabic), thereby trying to destroy the majazi (metaphorical) meanings of the hands, saq, laughter etc that has been attributed to Allah. O salafis what will we do when our language is limited yet we want to know about Allah correctly as allowed by our mind? We then form concepts on the basis of multiplicity of language combinations, rather than abiding by a singularity of language. So when Allah wants to express an intended meaning through language, and such language has more than one meaning one used more than other one, yet the intended meaning is the less used one what are we to do? We need to take three steps as stated by the theologians of Ahl Sunnah wa jamah the followers of Imam Ashari and they are: understanding context of the language, evidence of other texts, or analogy. This is only then when the evident meaning of the language if taken will be improper for Allah, such as taking Hand of Allah in the literal sense. If you salafis say that we should take it in the literal sense then what does the literal meaning show, except embodiment which is the essential attribute of the created things? If you deny this then have you given a new meaning to such terms such as hands, saq, Nuzul etc which is not supported either by language or by rationalism?

13) Imam Abu Hanifa (d. 150) says in his Wasiyya: "Had He been in a place and needing to sit and rest before creating the Throne, then the question 'Where was Allah?' would have applied to Him, which is impossible... We assert that Allah is established on the throne without His need (haja) nor settlement (istiqrar) upon it, for He it is Who preserves the Throne and other than it without needing any of them." This is the belief of the salaf (pious predecessor) in direct

contradiction to the belief and saying of the writer of the book aqeedah wasitiyya. The Prophet (saas) said in the hadeeth of Bukhari "Kana Allah wa lam yakun shai ghairuhu)" which means "Allah was, and there was nothing except Him". Thus He was and He is and He will be as He is without a need to sit or run or walk or sleep.

14) Every word has a reality in our existence, words which express a meaning, thus every attribute has a reality in our existence. How then such attributes we can connect and apply for Allah, the One true God, if its reality is connected to human existence? Will not it then imply a resemblance of God to our reality? The answer is no, it won't because the premise "every attribute has a reality in our existence" doesn't necessarily mean, every attribute has its root in our existence. There are attributes which are rooted from God, and God has imparted an idea regarding it in our existence, so we may understand it such as the seven attributes of God. There are yet attributes which are rooted from our existence solely for our existence which when applied to God necessitate interpretation to live up with the Highness of God, such as attributes of hand, face, eye, laughter etc. So attributes are rooted from God's reality and its partial image is applied to our existence so we may know God, and attributes which are rooted from our existence and applied to God in an indirect metaphorical way so we may understand the intention of such. The orthodox Islamic scholars of the ashaira school of thought by Allah's mercy and guidance have understood this and thus they have named attributes of perfection and attributes of imperfection. So ponder well.

15) Know this that the Ahl Sunnah has stated that some attributes exalt Allah and some if attributed to Him belittles Him, thus they stated attributes of perfection and attributes of imperfection, necessarily, the mind perceives it. For example the Saq, which is attributed to Allah, how come when human is said to have one saq it points to a defective human, is attributed to Allah?! It is more befitting that He be not attributed with a Saq in the literal sense, because it contradicts the necessary exaltation of Allah, by the mind. You claim that just as human has mercy, so too Allah has mercy, thus just as human has hand, so too Allah has hand, but without how, and this is not tashbeeh. It is what you say to us. Know this that, the effect of attribute is different from having the attribute, thus we see that there are some who has been shown mercy by Allah, which points to His mercy, just as created points to His creativity, unlike having hands, eyes, saq, face, body, laughter, fingers, palm, settlement. That is to say it is possible for some attributes (of Allah) to be there without it being similar to the humans, because we see the effect of such attribute, and it entails anthromorphism, if certain attributes are said to be possessed by Allah, thus for the sake of exaltation and escape from belittling Allah, necessarily, literalism must be rejected.

20) Know this, the scope of meaning of language or for that matter words can be extended through conceptual extrapolations and broadening and thus language is not only limited to usage in a certain dimension of concepts and perception. This is general rule of language but not universally applicable in a certain language's mode of activity because that would call for changes of the established basics, and also denying this as a general rule would call for the end of conceptual extrapolation and new perceptible entities

through this language. For example "hand" can be used as hand with flesh and bone but if we apply the general rule then it can be used in many other situations and frame-set of concepts and perceptions.

21) Why people who call themselves followers of pious predecessors and use the shrewdest technique to deceive Muslims and vilify the stars of Islamic theology and law. Why do these people who call themselves salafi (followers of pious predecessors) reject study of philosophy and logic? Is not intellect is a mercy from Allah to humankind. Is not intellect is a measure for many a truth in Allah's creation? Didn't Allah encourage using our intellect? What can nourish our intellect more than Allah's book, Sunnah of Prophet, philosophy and logic? Do these people fear of losing Islam? How dare they think of such a thing when no mind can exhaust Allah, and no logic or philosophy can defeat the words of Allah? Our inability to think do not mean that certain branch of praised knowledge such as philosophy and logic is harm. If we take backslide and do not engage in intellectual activism, surely philosophers and logicians, who master these will say things and ideas which will shake many people's faith. How do defeat these men? How to save Islamic belief and truth from these men? Only through mastering what they have used against us, and that is philosophy and logic. Who else is in more need than these two subjects other than students of Islam and its scholars? Mutazila used logic and philosophy to harm Islam, and Ash'arites used the same to break the backbone of Mu'tazilites. Has the salafis been able to defeat the greatest intellectual threat in Islam i.e. the Mu'tazilites doctrine? No they haven't, rather the salafis used blindness to further themselves from Mu'tazilites while it crept in to the Islamic lands and spread its poison. Allah used Imam

Ashari and blessed him with wisdom and knowledge and his followers to stand for Islam against all intellectual crusade, and even today the followers of Imam A'shari has been in the forefronts of intellectual jihad, and they are the soldiers of the front line of this war, while the salafis have abstained themselves from the enemies of Islam, and is focusing their Saudi oil money to attack and defame Ash'arites and all other Muslims. The salafis must come back to the Islam which Allah helped by the hand of Imam 'Ashari, because the Ashari understanding of Islam is the understanding of the Prophet (saas) and his companions. may Allah bless us and guide us to support Islam each day of our life till Islam rules both the mind and the land.

22) The understanding of the Ahl Sunnah wa Jamah i.e. Ashairas and maturdiyyas in Allah Supreme's attributes can be summarized on the basis of these four points: embodiment, division, parts and limitations. All these four are the defining factors of the created world. Therefore all attributes which if taken apparently without interpretation will fall in those four or in any one of those. Thus it is said that 'all that the mind imagines about Allah, Allah is not that', thus if someone says Allah is on the throne above literally by His Self, then our minds will imagine that in the bodily terms because our minds do not perceive what is beyond the created world, thus we need to interpret it to make sure that Allah's establishing on throne is not what our language and our world will point to.

23) The followers of Imam Abu al Hasan Ashari on the basis of the ayat 'Ask the people of zikr when ye do not know' (Al-Quran), states that Iman in its essence of the term is only certainty by the heart, and also as has been stated by Imam

Abu Hanifah that Iman in its essence of the term does not increase or decrease. It is because when it increases in increase in perfection without the essence being change, and the same when it decreases, it decreases in perfection. The point to note is the essence of Iman, when it is accepted by the heart there is no place for its increase, i.e. the Iman itself in its essence. It is because on what basis Iman will increase if it has not established a foundation for itself, i.e. the essence, thus to it to increase there must be a foundation. Thus there is no increase in the meaning of the Iman (faith) in its limits and boundaries, which is a decisive limit and boundary. If Iman does not possess an essential limit of itself then what amount of increase will make one a believer or what amount of decrease will make one a disbeliever? It is thus said by Imam Abu hanifah and the Asharites that Iman itself, in its meaning does not increase or decrease, and they are the articles of faith which is 'belief in Allah, His Books, His Angels, His Messengers, The last day and the resurrection, and in destiny. No one can add to this something nor can anyone decrease from it something, as this is the essence of the term Iman which do not increase or decrease. If someone affirms these by his heart with a firm conviction, he is a believer to Allah, and if he says by mouth along with it, then he is a believer to Allah and to the people, so that the Islamic law can be passed on him in the world, and if he acts by his organs i.e. does deeds of worship then his being believer to both world and the Allah is even more evident and more perfect. As to the hadeeth which states that one who leaves prayer is a disbeliever, it needs an interpretation, and to the hadeeth which states that between faith and disbelief is the leaving of salat (prayer), and this hadeeth can be understood by the verse of Surah Al-Imran 'Hum lil kufri yaumaizin ...' i.e. they were that day closer to disbelief than belief, which

suggests that a person can roam between belief and disbelief. As to the verse of Holy Quran which states that 'And Allah will not let your faith go in vain', pointing to those who prayed towards mosque in Jerusalem, means that your prayers (i.e. salat) won't be rejected, and meaning of prayer as Iman is in its perfection, but not in its essence. Also Allah states in Holy Quran often joining between 'Those who believe and do good deeds (religious)', this joining is because Iman and good deeds are different, and that Allah doesn't command evil, thus He has joined the good deeds with the Iman, so that man may not bring the excuse of only believing, as not doing obligatory good deeds is a sin, such as leaving prayer. As to the verse where Allah states that 'Indeed the believers are those whose hearts...', meaning the true believers who are of a very high degree of faith and worship, as there are degrees of believers on the basis of their perfection in Iman, but all have the essential form of Iman, common, and also a believer can enter hell and will lastly exit it for paradise as stated in Hadeeth 'one who has atoms weight of Iman in his heart...', and the Ijma of the Islamic scholars that a believer will not reside in hell forever, as a mercy from Allah. So the belief of the ahl Sunnah is that Iman increases and decreases in perfection, but not in its essence, and that Iman in its essence is conviction of the heart to the truth of the articles of Iman as stated. One thing more, which is that Imam Abu hanifah stated that Iman doesn't increase or decrease, and this we have explained, but we want to point out the fact that he stated the reason for it, saying that if deeds were in the essential term of Iman then a woman who when leaves prayer or fasting in hayd would have been termed an infidel or disbeliever. Ibn Barr stated refuting this that this is something which is not doing in the right way, i.e. praying in hayd just as fasting in Eid days is not correct. We say that Did

Allah make a situation for His servants where she loses her faith for a while by not doing prayer and fasting, thereby if she dies she will die as a disbeliever? If you say no then we say thus deeds are condition of the perfection in Iman, but if you state the same reason as above, then it still doesn't change her not losing her faith for a while.

24) The Aqeedah of the early Muslims before the fitna of the Mu'tazilites were that they used to affirm for Allah, all that is affirmed by Allah such as Life, knowledge, hearing, speech, power, will, sight, honour, dignity, blessing, and grandeur. They didn't use to separate between attributes of essence and attributes of deeds. Rather they used to take all of these attributes in a single way, attributing to Allah. As to the attributes of hand, eyes, etc they used to term such attributes as attributes of force, and didn't use to interpret. (Milal Wa Nahal, by Sheikh Shahrastani, 79).

We can see that in such attributes of hands, eyes, etc they didn't connect the word 'haqiqi', which in Islam means 'use of the word in the context in which it is made for i.e. literal meaning', because you see in Islamic science word is divided in to two types: that which has a meaning in the literal sense (original meaning), and that which has a metaphorical meaning. So for example hand in the literal sense means an embodied form with flesh and blood, and as to the metaphorical meaning it can mean, power, ability, help etc in context.

But the certain part of the early Muslims (i.e. salafs) went to the extent of embodying Allah in their hope of affirming the

attributes such as hands, eyes, feet, etc. Some went to the side of interpreting such attributes by the authority of language in the metaphorical side, and some completely stopped from interpretation and said 'we do not know the true intent of the word which came down (for attributes).' (Milal Wa Nahal 79)

Their saying of 'we do not know the true intent of..' excludes the possibility of literalism, and allows for the possibility of the existence of a meaning other than that of literal intent necessitating a form for Allah (glory is only for Allah). They also stated that we are not obliged to know the meaning of such attributes or its interpretation. Then there came a certain generation later on who added to the previous statement of the early Muslims 'taking it in the evident/literal way', and an explanation which didn't allow interpretation or abstinence from the acceptance of evident literal meaning, thereby falling in anthropomorphism, and that in direct contradiction to what the early Muslims said. This anthropomorphism was purely in the Jews, but not in all of them, rather in the sect named 'Qaraeen', who did such when they got a text from Torah pointing to such. (ibid.79-80)

One thing should be said that the great salafi scholar Bin Baaz, followed such a method of acceptance when he stated that Allah has an attribute of shadow of His own, on the basis of a hadeeth narrated by Bukhari and Muslim. (<http://binbaz.org.sa/mat/4234>)

It should also be noted that some early Muslims used ilm kalâm to defend the faith to the point that it was fully formed

and decisively built by Imam Abu Hasan Ashari. The early Muslims were pure of belief till Mu'tazilites came and the early Muslims took help of Kalam (logic and philosophy) to refute them and establish a fully vibrant theology of the orthodox Islam, which was called Ashairasm. (Milal wa Nahal 81)

25) If we are to use language to understand Allah's attributes then let us see what language says. In language there are two types of form for meaning: literalism and metaphorical. Literalism is the meaning for which the word is known for, and metaphor is the meaning for which the word can be used for. Thus the literalism is the basis of language and metaphor is a certain form of usage for the language. We then are entitled to stay within these two limits in language, and any departure from the two destroys the purpose of language. How come we are to use literal meanings and metaphorical ones? A literal meaning can be imposed on more than one object or thing, and a metaphorical meaning too can be imposed more than one object and thing. To impose a literal meaning to more than one thing can be done only when the literal meaning has a bridge between the two things in the complete sense, or majority sense or partial sense, but however if it has a similarity in the minority sense then the meaning loses its applicability on the second thing. For example hand of man, and hand of the monkey, we use the term hand with its literal application *because* the hands of man and monkey have a similarity either on the basis of majority, or complete or partial. In case of metaphor the similarity also can be in the same way as that of literalism.

There is only a similarity in the external manifestation either in complete sense or partial sense or majority sense, but not in the internal sense. So for example we say 'his hand was the fire of hell sweeping through the land of sinners'. The external manifestation is the object of notice and that is 'his wrath and judgment', and this in no way expresses the reality of the internal existence of his hand, but rather points to his power, or the metaphorical hand. If we then say 'Allah's hand is open and wide' meaning His mercy and blessing is too much for a man to count. The question is when we say Allah has hands in the literal sense, are we speaking the truth? If we say yes then that would imply a similarity, and this is in direct contradiction with Allah being unlimited and infinite in His existence and attributes. If you say your excuse that Allah has hands without 'how' or 'similarity' then on what basis you say such a thing? Your claim doesn't fall either under the literal implication or the metaphorical implication, of the language of Arabic. Also the similarity revolves around limit and non-limit, such as our saying man's hand literally meaning 'embodied form', or our saying hand of justice 'justice with a deficiency'. If we say Hand of Allah firstly it cannot be literal as language do not allow Allah to have an embodied form but rather Hand of Allah is an attribute of meaning with maximum perfection. Thus in this way we can know Allah's attributes through Arabic language.

To conclude, the salafis are our brethrens in religion even though they have ignorance in some important things, and

we must not allow the enemies of Islam, those who harbour in their hearts, minds and thoughts a grudge and envy against Islam and Islamic values, from the secularists, democrats and feminists and other religions, to wage enmity among ourselves. Our support must never be with them against our own kind, thus those who claim that the Saudi regime must be changed in the name of Islam are not our friends because they are calling for chaos in Muslim lands and Muslims, so be aware of such people. We will not accept the salafi method and we will keep on reminding them, Inshallah to correct themselves. May Allah give them insight and open our hearts for Islam each day.

An analysis on Aqeedah Wasatiyyah by Allama Ibn Taimiyyah

The establishment of Allah on the throne, as proven by many verses of Holy Quran (1)

Allah's descent at night (2)

Allah's laughter, astonishment, and joy (3)

Allah's feet and shin (4)

The holy Prophet's (saas) prayer 'Our Lord, who is in the heavens (As-Sama), glorified be your name, yours is the command in heaven as your mercy is in heaven...' (5)

The throne (fawqa) water, and Allah is (fawqa) throne. (6)
note- fawqa can contain two meanings, physical and hypothetical.

The hadeeth of the slave girl 'where is Allah' (7)

The hadeeth 'The best Iman is that you know Allah is with you wherever you are' (8)

The verse 'Allah's hand is over their hands'. (9)

The hadeeth prohibiting spitting in front when one prays because Allah is in front of his face (10)

Prophet's (saas) prayer '...your the evident, there is none (fawqa) you, your the hidden, there is none except you...' (11)

Hadeeth of seeing Allah, with the addition 'A'zam' (Allah is even greater), as in Abu dawood. (12)

These Hadiths are shown as proof in Aqeedah Wasatiyya, confirming attributes of Allah. If we take the proofs in the literal sense, and literal means, as used in language, without any interpretation, then we will see contradictions, to which escape is possible only by means of interpretation, as has been stated by Allah in (3:7), holy Quran. It is true that we may not understand or grasp all the interpretations, but it is certain that we can deny literal implication of such proofs, which need interpretation necessarily. So for example, number 1 and 2 contradicts each other if taken in the literal sense, because to descent literally the throne must be emptied, but glory be to Allah, as throne doesn't limit Him, and His descent is meaning the descent of His command (i.e. mercy or angels) as explained by Ahl Sunnah Wa Jamah, while His establishment meaning, His dominion and power over His

Kingdom, as He is King of kings. (Refer to 'A defence of Ash'arism').

Laughter, joy and astonishment are of the unique attributes of humans, thus the meaning of such is known by Allah in the fullest sense, and are not taken literally, if taken will liken Allah with humans. It may be that such similitude are given by Allah and attributed to Him to make us understand, the acceptability and praiseworthiness of certain deeds. Allah states in Holy Quran, that Allah has given all similitude in His book for mankind to ponder and understand His intents, which may not necessarily mean essential attributes of Allah.

The attributes of feet and shin, its possible meaning has been stated in the book 'A defence of Ash'arism.

Allah being in heaven as stated in 5 and 7 can mean Allah worshipped by residents of the heaven as stated in the verse '...And He is Allah lord in the heavens...', meaning 'worshipped'. The people of exegesis of holy Quran have explained this verse in such way.

Number 8 and 10 contradicts with 1 and 6 if taken literally. Also number 10 if taken literally would make our bowing down towards Ka'ba useless, because remember that Allah states in holy Quran, wherever you turn your face you will find the face of Allah, so it would mean if taken literally that prayer in any direction is valid, which is not right. Also this verse of Allah's face being everywhere doesn't contain a meaning unless it is interpreted and the meaning understood properly, which Allah's dominion and power is everywhere and to Allah belongs, all things.

Number 9 if taken literally invalidates the purpose of the verse, because it means after interpreting Allah's hand as either, the believer's allegiance to obey Allah or their covenant with Allah, and if it was in the context of war, it would mean Allah's help with them, against the infidels.

Number 11 if taken literally will render the hadeeth void of any meaning, but rather infact this hadeeth is used by many so called Sufis who use it in support of the idea of Allah being with the creation, one and same. Thus it must be interpreted.

Number 12 established the seeing of Allah, with only the exception, 'A'zam', and this word if taken literally will give Allah a certain size like bodies, but Allah be glorified, because this word means the opposite which is Allah is greater than anything else in creation, not bounded by limits, or form, or any mind. Thus the howness of this sight is as stated by Ahl Sunnah that it is the resemblance of the seeing but not the seen, i.e. Allah.

These are the proofs which Ibn Taymiyyah stated in his book in support of Allah's attribute. We need to understand that not everything which Allah attributes to Him, are necessarily His attributes literally, but are used to impart a certain meaning, because our language cannot explain Allah, but Allah uses the created language to impart His intents which are to be understood, but not taken literally.

Ibn Taimiyyah states in his book: The meaning of 'Allah being with us' doesn't mean that Allah is mixed with His creation, because language doesn't point towards it. The meaning of 'ma' in the literal sense means being by oneself in physical or

essential manner, unlike being in the metaphorical sense. How come Ibn Taymiyyah states what he stated, yet his principle is, Allah's attributes are taken without 'howness' 'likeness with creation' and 'negation'. Didn't he just do the things which he didn't allow? When he stated 'not mixing with creation' he has given a howness of 'Allah's being with us' and he negated this 'mayyia (with)', according to his understanding of negation, which is denying the literal meaning. The Ahl Sunnah just does that when they explain the attributes such as Hands of Allah, His face, His Shin, establishment on throne etc. He then stated that 'Allah being in the heavens do not mean that heavens cover Allah or contains Him. How come he states this when he rejected the belief of Ahl Sunnah about Allah's establishment on the throne meaning- the throne does not contain or carries Allah? How come he states that Allah descends by His Self at night without 'how', when he states in the same place that Allah's being with us (non-literally) do not negate His being in the direction of above? Why didn't he say that Allah is with us literally just as He descends at night literally, without how or likeness? It is because He being with us literally will negate Allah being above literally? It is contradictory to say such a thing by him, using literalism at one place and not using it for another, without any proof whether textual or rational.

He then states about Iman that it is saying and deeds, saying of the heart and the organs. Here we need to consider that he is in agreement with Ash'aira, because Ahl Sunnah (i.e Ash'aira) states that Iman, is believing in yourself in the articles of faith and deeds are completion of faith. I do not see any difference between their saying and the saying of salaf. The salaf stated Iman is belief and deed, just as Ahl Sunnah states. Next point is, he states that Iman is saying of

the heart and tongue and organs. How come he attributed the word 'saying' to heart and organs when literally the organs and the heart do not speak, yet He attributes speech to Allah in the literal sense? Allah's speech is more befitting of being interpreted than the speech of organs and the heart, because Allah do not resemble humans in their speaking with sounds, letters and medium of air.

Lastly to say, Ibn Taimiyyah explains the hadeeth of the '...believer who does adultery is not a believer when he does it...' and so on, as a believer who has incomplete faith. Why didn't he act on the literal meaning, making a believer not a believer as Prophet (saas) stated? The salafis of today state that one who abandons prayer (salat) becomes a kafir (infidel), and they took the literal meaning of the hadeeth which states so, and explains the hadeeth as prayer (salat) being an exception to this. Why the salafis didn't take this hadeeth too, as an exception, as they follow Ibn Taimiyyah in Aqeedah? Is it that you take some as you like literally and interpret some as you like?

And also Sheikh Bin Baaz made interpretation:

ومن ذلك قوله تعالى في قصة نوح: وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ الْأَوْحِ وَدُسِّرَ تَجْرِي
بِأَعْيُنِنَا الْآيَةَ، وقوله سبحانه في قصة موسى: وَلِتَصْنَعْ عَلَى عَيْنِي أَقْسَرَهَا أَهْلُ
السَّنة بِأَن الْمَرَادُ بِقَوْلِهِ سَبْحَانَهُ: تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا أَيْ أَنَّهُ سَبْحَانَهُ سِيرَهَا بِرِعَايَتِهِ
جَلَّ وَعَلَا، حَتَّى اسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ، وهكذا قوله في قصة موسى: وَلِتَصْنَعْ
عَلَى عَيْنِي أَيْ عَلَى رِعَايَتِهِ سَبْحَانَهُ وَتَوْفِيقِهِ لِلْقَائِمِينَ عَلَى تَرْبِيَّتِهِ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ
وَالسَّلَامُ.

وهكذا قوله سبحانه للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: وَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا
أَيُّ أَنْكَ تَحْتَ كَلَامَتِنَا وَعَنَانَتِنَا وَحَفْظِنَا . وَلَيْسَ هَذَا كُلُّهُ مِنَ التَّأْوِيلِ ، بَلْ ذَلِكَ مِنَ
التفسير المعروف في لغة العرب

أما التأويل للصفات وصرفها عن ظاهرها فهو مذهب أهل البدع

(<http://binbaz.org.sa/mat/1841>)

First Para states: ‘..and from that the story of Nuh (a) "And we carried him....pass by our eyes..."', and saying of Allah in the story of Musa (a) "And that you do on my eyes", The Ahl Sunna wa Jamah explained it that the intent of the verse is that Allah Supreme, caused it to travel under His care and allowance, until it settled on the mount Judi.....(then he goes on saying)...And this is not interpretation, but that is from explanation known in the Arabic language, and as to interpreting the attributes of Allah and changing it from the evident literal meaning is the way of the heretical sect.’

(I ask, that if interpreting is the way of the heretical sect then, what did Ibn Baaz just do now stating the intent of the verse? Didn't he just move from the evident literal meaning to a norm of interpretation which he called explanation? He a contradictory claim in this way and changing interpretation with explanation won't make any difference. The Ashaira i.e. orthodox Islamic sect used the same way to explain some intent of the attributes of Allah which befits context,

language and rhetoric. Do we say of some attributes of Allah allows explanation which is more like interpretation and some do not? If some attributes of Allah are explained/interpreted then it means some attributes of Allah has interpretations/explanations. In this way the salafis are following the Ashairas in attributes of Allah)

Part III

Self-Purification: The reality of Sufism, Islamic spirituality

What is Freedom? Science cannot answer it, because science doesn't recognize it, as everything in science is strict laws. Philosophy has yet to answer it, thus still bragging about it. Then what can define freedom? Our own whims? Is it an answer, or a chaos?

Read...

Introduction

Philosophy of Islam

Since time immemorial man had sought to justify their existence on some higher power or being, whose idea and concept manifested in form of religions and pathways. This inner tendency of man has led to the proof of his yearning towards some higher thing which is there in his self, which he yearns to realize in its reality. Mankind thus have been a worshipper since recorded history shows. One should ask this

question that why he has sought to realize this from within him, and what steps he took to realize that inner thirst for the greatest truth? This discussion will Inshallah show and elaborate such points.

Mankind was weak, and his being intellectually powerful today doesn't show that he has lost the yearning to achieve the great truth other than himself. It may be that such yearning is covered by his arrogance and ignorance of the truth, but nevertheless, this shining torch of the idea of being loyal to a great being is always there in him, even in the atheists who express the greatness of this inner truth, and that is why there is a saying "there are not atheists in a foxhole", which is to say in other words that in the times of war in the holes dug deep for soldiers to face the enemy, even atheists in such places pray to the higher being which he may forget at other times. The idea and belief in God is the inner truth whose evidence for existence has fascinated man more than it has misguided him like the atheists. Man had never been abandoned by his self of coming in terms with the fascinating universe surrounding him, and he has expressed the idea of God in form of religions which has made him sacrifice his life, but it is not to be said that religion has made him kill each other, but rather the absence of proper religion had done so. It is to be said that today we speak of God's existence and the proof of such existence which mankind has felt in him when his history was young. When we see what is around us we can see the fine architect of the universe,

which we have explored through science and philosophy, but the people who had wished to go further beyond the two attained the proof that such architect demands an architecture, which humanity has called God. Human kind had given Him all the attributes of perfection in honour and for God's greatness. The grand universe is a proof for God's existence even though some people do not wish to go beyond their understanding of the universe. Nonetheless no one has been able to proof that God doesn't exist, but rather the contrary. Mankind has sought from God guidance through religious attitude, and thus throughout history man has worshipped God through religion. Let us first consider God, who is He? He must be someone greater than universe, one who has not any defects in His perfect existence for then mankind wouldn't have named Him God, or the King of kings, or such grand names of perfections. This God of ours must then be wisest, most powerful, eternal and living along with all attributes of perfection, voiding all attributes of imperfection. To have guidance from Him would mean that such guidance should be enough for us, as humanity's existence is concerned. The failure of perceiving God's guidance which is religion, have caused chaos among us, thus it is to be said that as humankind our first duty is to know God and His religion which He meant for us, and our salvation. This religion must be pure, free from human forging and manipulation, purely from God. Only one religion today claims such a claim and that is Islam. Thus we say to all mankind that Islam is the religion of God. He has revealed this religion so that we build a relationship with Him and

among ourselves, nations, states and individual. This is worship and when we speak of this worship we mean that the relationship which describes all the faces of relationship in connection with the above criterions. How we know of such manner of worship? How we know God? We can say that His existence do not necessarily make us know everything about Him or about worship, so there must be a way for it, which is termed revelation, and this is God's words which He sent to humankind through His Messenger, a special position He chooses among mankind to impart His will towards humankind and his need. God's Book, teaches us all that we need and in Islam, which means submission to the will of God. This book is known as Holy Quran, which teaches us about worship. The first and best teacher was God's messenger, Muhammad (pbuh), and then under His guidance this religion took shape and completed before his death, but He started the tradition of Islamic knowledge and wisdom which were to be carried on the shoulders of numerous men of wisdom and knowledge, whose duty was to guide humankind in the way of Holy Quran and God's messenger, Muhammad (pbuh). It should be stated that, this norm is not new but since the beginning of mankind God sent such messengers and Prophets to guide mankind towards Him. Prophets and messengers are the bearer of God's words, and dictates, who never fail in doing so. The Holy Quran being the last of its kind from God, which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), through the angel Gabriel. Angels are such honest messengers created from light who impart God's commands as He wishes, one of which being bringing His

words to these human Messengers and Prophets. All this because we human lack the ability to form a guidance which will ensure our well being, because imperfection is one of our essential attributes.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has thus received the guidance, Holy Quran from God, Allah in Arabic, as He named Himself, giving us the guidance for our life, for all of mankind, as he being the last of prophet who have risen from Arabia from the tribe of Quraish in the honoured city of Makkah. Islam has given us an opportunity to return to Allah. Islam is the last book from Allah as there will be no more Prophets and Messengers. Islam's foundation is holy Quran and Sunnah (way) of the Prophet (pbuh), and this Holy Book consists of 114 chapters with different names, revealed through 23 years of prophet's (pbuh) life.

As it has been stated that our being thirsty for the higher truth for the knowledge of our identity shows that our being here on earth is related to that higher being, God, we are thus on behalf of God, so to picture the correct frame of our existence. Thus we sought Him, and guidance towards Him, which we as Muslims confirm that to be Holy Quran and Sunnah. The duty of our life is His worship, and living by His religion, wholly based on Holy Quran and the way of the Prophet (pbuh). Mankind each day when he has mastered inches of existence have moved inches further from God, because his venture in to the existence haven't been guided

by God's guidance, thus he knew of the existence as his weak mind pointed to, thereby resting on various false notions of himself and existence, and it has piled up today to the extent that humankind has become almost blind. It then the duty of the wise worshippers to reawaken the long suppressed thirst of humankind which he had before, thereby calling him to God and his life by God's ideals for humanity. Mankind thus believe then he must pray to God, manifesting it in form of worship as Islam taught such as prayer, fasting, zakat (charity with a amount), and pilgrimage. Each moment these five important steps will make man, remember, God, and about man's true purpose, and by gradual increase in worship mankind will purify these five pillars of his existence and worship.

When mankind is on the point of spiritual perfection his long hidden thirst which had started since his beginning of his breath, will come to be quenched through a level known as ihsan where mankind will meet his Lord, seeing Him by his heart and knowing that God is seeing him. When mankind will come to this level he will know that all his efforts of his life has been fruitful, and his thirst been satisfied, because he has met God, through Islam.

Role of Sufism:

Sufism is the way which seeks to ensure that this ascent of the human self towards Allah is smooth and clear.

What is Sufism?

There are many people who think that Sufism is misguidance. Such ignorant people barely know the greatness of Sufism. What is Sufism? In short it is the highest form of Islamic worship through self purification, wisdom of the higher things and obedience to the holy law, unlike those Muslims who obey Islamic law yet their wisdom and inner heights do not rise above their necks, and they are falling in deliberate sins. Let us briefly look at what Sufism is:

Sufism is a knowledge through which one knows the states of the human soul, praiseworthy or blameworthy, how to purify it from the blameworthy and ennoble it by acquiring the praiseworthy, and to journey and proceed to Allah Most High, fleeing unto Him. Its fruits are the heart's development, knowledge of God through direct experience and ecstasy, salvation in the next world, triumph through gaining Allah's pleasure, the attainment of eternal happiness, and illuminating and purifying the heart so that noble matters disclose themselves, extraordinary states are revealed, and one perceives what the insight of others is blind to.

-- Muhammad Amin Kurdi

Sufism consists of noble behaviour (akhlaq karima) that is made manifest at a noble time on the part of a noble person in the presence of a noble people.

-- Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Al-Qassab

Sufism consists of entering every exalted quality (khulq) and leaving behind every despicable quality

-- Abu Muhammad Al-Jariri

Be both a jurisprudent and a Sufi - never just one of the two.
Truly, by the Divine Right, I am advising you sincerely!
For the former is hardened, his heart tastes no Godwariness,
While the latter is ignorant - of what use is the ignorant?

- Imam Shaf'i in his book "Diwan"

The Sufis are the saints (friends of Allah) who have been always wise about Allah and Islamic law, who has always been pious and humble, whose piety revealed in actions and championed in their hearts, because they have learnt the piety of hearts through realizations from Allah, due to their devotions towards Allah. Imam Ghazzali has detailed in his book "Al-Arbauun fi usool din" (The forty in the principles of religion), how to attain the loftiest piety in one's heart, which will be discussed shortly in the chapter: self-purification, Allah willing.

Prerequisites of a Sufi (The ideal cleric)

Knowledge of Creed and Law

Allah says in Holy Quran '**Whoever has been bestowed wisdom has been given a great good**'. The Prophet (saas) said that '*Seeking knowledge on every Muslim is obligatory*', and some hadeeth state that the one who hasn't benefited from his knowledge on the day of judgement will be the worst of the people on that day, as the first goal of humans is

to seek the means to attain salvation in the hereafter. Thus religious knowledge must be sought by each Muslims. This knowledge is essential and extra. The essential knowledge is a must for every Muslim, sane, adult; where as the extra knowledge is a blessing if it is sought. To be a wise Muslim, and a devout one, both types are needed, and for an Islamic leader specially or an Islamic cleric, or for that matter, a Sufi cleric.

Imam Shafi', one of the greatest jurist to have ever lived, who was a student of Imam Abu Hanifah states that, the Sufi must possess the knowledge of jurisprudence and possessing the knowledge of this demands that a Sufi person must have the knowledge of Iman (creed/faith) and the law (fiqh).

Knowing the correct creed (Aqeedah)

This topic is discussed in a defensive way, due to the fact that there has been a sharp rise in the salafi (a Muslim sect) dawah today around the world, financed by the Saudi money. I have nothing against the Saudi establishment theologically and neither do I say, 'go and kill them all', as some do today. What I intend to do is to defend the theological attack that has been coming from Saudi Arabia on the traditional theological school of Islam, which has hailed high the flag of Islam throughout its more than 1000 years of history. This theological school is known as the Ashairas.

To begin, it should be said when the created talk of the creator, we, the created, face extreme difficulties, metaphysically, because Allah, the One True God, is completely different from the created. How is it then we being the created understand the Creator from Holy Quran and Sunnah, without falling in to anthromorphism? The theological school of Ash'arism, has been the champion of defending Islam and the identity of Allah, without likening Him with the created, nor denying Him of perfection. Let us first see what anthromorphism is:

‘Anthromorphism is the attribution of uniquely [human](http://en.wikipedia.org) characteristics to non-human creatures and beings, natural and supernatural phenomena...’ (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)

What the ashairas has done is made clear to the Muslims about how to understand Allah, from Holy Quran and Sunnah. They have used the science known as scholastic theology to defend Islamic faith from the people who deny God's attributes fully, and from those who affirm for God all attributes of Holy Quran and Sunnah *literally*, therefore likening Allah with the creation. So the Ashairas view i.e. belief of the orthodox Islam about Creator can be stated as balanced. Essential attributes of Allah which each Muslim must believe in without a doubt are:

Allah has the attribute of creating

Allah has the attribute of oneness

Allah has the attribute of hearing without an ear

Allah has the attribute of sight without eyes

Allah has the attribute of will, which doesn't change, but Allah is eternally willing, as change of will is the attribute of humans, who are created.

Allah has attribute of transcendence

Allah has attribute of speech without a tongue, or words or letters, as they depend on the medium of air. Allah's speech is the eternal attribute which is with Allah essentially, expressed in to words and letters which are created.

Allah has the attribute of life without the need for nourishment, flesh or blood. It is possible for a thing to be living without having a body or nourishment. This attribute can be understood by the rule of negation which is we know the concept of decay and death, thus such decay and death is not befitting God, so He must be living in the sense that He doesn't decay or change do not take place on God. Also one who is dead cannot create thus He must be living.

Allah does not have a colour; colour depends on wave length and the amount of absorption of light.

Allah doesn't have a body, because body is subject to change, division and inter dependency, and it is not possible to conceive a body without such imperfections.

Allah has the attribute of knowledge, a knowledge which is eternally one with Allah, without an increase or decrease in it. Allah is eternally knowledgeable.

Allah has the attribute of power, which do not increase or decrease.

Allah is not limited by any known dimensions of space and time.

The general principle is: Allah is our Creator, Lord of existence who do not have a body, or organs, or changes do not take place for Allah. Whatever attributes that we see in Holy Quran and Sunnah about Allah speaking about His eyes, hands, descent etc. which if taken literally likens Allah with the attributes of physicality, change and embodiment, *must be* interpreted, if there is a fear of someone saying that such be taken literally. Many of the early Muslims of first and second centuries of Hijri kept quiet about such and stated 'We believe in such and do not know the intent of such' (Milal Wa Nahal, chapter: Sifatiyya, by Shahrastani). Those early Muslims *never* said 'we believe in such literally'. When there was the trouble of the anthropomorphists (mujassima, in Arabic), who stated such must be taken in the evident literal way as language dictates, whose howness we don't know, the theologians of the Ash'ariya, took steps using logic and scholastic theology to defend the purity of Allah's highness and identity. Let us give one or two examples of how they understood such attributes which seem humanly, in the evident way.

Allah says in Holy Quran "**And we carried him...pass by Our eyes...**". The Ahl Sunna wa Jamah (people of Sunnah) i.e. the Ash'arites, explained it that the intent of the verse is that Allah Supreme, caused it to travel under His care and allowance, until it settled on the mount Judi. It is supported by Arabic language, and context of the verse where it is stated.

Allah says '**And the sky We built with hands; verily We outspread it**'. Sheikh Nu Keller says in explaining this verse 'al-Tabari ascribes the figurative explanation (ta'wil) of '*with hands*' as meaning "*with power (bi quwwa)*" through five chains of transmission to Ibn 'Abbas, who died 68 years after the Hijra, Mujahid who died 104 years after the Hijra, Qatada [ibn Da'ama] who died 118 years after the Hijra, Mansur [ibn Zadhan al-Thaqafi] who died 131 years after the Hijra, and Sufyan al-Thawri who died 161 years after the Hijra (*Jami' al-bayan*, 27.7–8). I mention these dates to show just how early they *were*.' (Defence of Ash'arism, www.religionislam.weebly.com <http://muhammadibnkateb.weebly.com/>)

We can see that the earliest of Islamic scholars including the great companion of Holy Prophet (saas) Ibn Abbas, used figurative explanation (ta'wil). It is noteworthy to say that the Prophet (saas) prayed for Ibn Abbas saying '*....and teach him Tawee'*', in a hadeeth as narrated.

In this way such verses are to be understood, and each Muslim must have pure understanding about Allah, so that

their faith remains free from heresy and misguidance. Unfortunately the modern day salafis, who were known as *Mujassima/Mushabbiha* in the Islamic history, think the ashairas as heretics, outcasts, because they do 'figurative explanation'. Is it a sin to think highly of Allah?

The question may be asked that who has given you the right to interpret in such a way. The answer can be by the verse of Holy Quran as Allah stated '**Nothing is like Him and He is the All-hearing and All-Seeing**'. We need to remember that idolatry in history occurred when mankind had given a physical form of their gods, and such a form was only manifested when they had given this form in their minds first, believing in a form of their gods. Therefore we cannot say Allah has a physical form, which we do not know, because it is a way to idolize.

To conclude this topic it should be said as Ibn Al-Jawzi Al-Hanbali said, our failure to perceive a reality beyond the physical existence should not deceive us in thinking Allah in human terms.

The creed summarized

Knowledge of faith (creed) as defined by Imam Ibn Asakir in Aqeedah Murshidah (the guiding creed), in general terms:

[Know, may Allah guide us and you, that it is obligatory upon every accountable person to know that Allah is the only God in his dominion. He created the entire world, the upper and the lower, the Throne and the Chair, the heavens and earth,

and everything in them and between them. All the creation is subjugated by His Power. No speck moves except by His will. He has no manger for the creation with Him, and has no partner in His Dominion. He is Alive and Self-subsistent. He is not seized somnolence or sleep. He is the One who knows the unforeseen and the evidenced by His creation. Nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden from Him. He knows what is on land and in sea. Not a leaf does fall but He knows about it. There is no grain in the darkness of earth, or anything which is moist or dry but is inscribed in a clear Book. His knowledge encompasses everything. He knows the count of all things. He does whatever He wills. He has the Power to do whatever He wills. To Him is the Dominion, and He needs none. To Him belong the Glory and Everlastingness. To Him are the Ruling and the Predestination. He has the names of Perfection. No one hinders what He decreed. No one prevents what He gives. He does in His dominion whatever He wills. He rules His creation with whatever He wills. He does not hope for reward and does not fear punishment. There is no right on Him that is binding, and no one exercises rule over Him. Every endowment from Him is due to His Generosity and every punishment from Him is just. He is not questioned about what He does, but they are questioned. He existed before the creation. He does not have a before or an after. He does not have an above or a below, a right or a left, an 'in front of' or 'a behind', a whole or a part. It must not be said: when was He? Or How is He? He is existent without a beginning or a place. He created beings and willed for the times. He is not bound to time and is not designated with place. His

management of one matter does not distract Him from another. Delusions do not apply to Him, and He is not encompassed by the mind. He is not conceivable in the minds. He is not imagined in the self nor pictured in delusions. He is not grasped with delusions or thoughts.

(Nothing is like Him and He is the All-hearing and All-Seeing)]

Know, may Allah be merciful to you by guiding you to the acceptable deeds, that our Master Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah, the son of 'Abdul Muttalib, the son of Hashim, the son of 'Abdu Manaf, the son of Qusayy, the son of Kilab, the son of Murrah, the son of Ka'b, the son of Lu'ayy, the son of Ghalib, the son of Fihr, the son of Malik, the son of an-Nadr, the son of Kinanah, the son of Khuzaymah, the son of Mudrikah, the son of Ilyas, the son of Mudar, the son of Nizar, the son of Ma'add, the son of 'Adnan, is the slave of Allah, His Messenger, His Prophet, and His Beloved

He is the best of the entire creation, and the leader of his followers who will have shining faces and illuminating upper arms and lower legs on the Day of Judgment. His Lord sent him to the humans and jinn as a luminous lantern, giving good tidings and warnings, and calling to worship Allah by His Will.

He got the Revelation through the entrusted Jibril who is the head of the honoured angels. Allah created them from light.

Obedience is inherent in them, and Allah gave them the strength to obey. They do not sleep and they do not get tired. They do not eat or drink. They do not disobey Allah, but rather they perform all that which they are ordered to do.

His Book is the wise Dhikr. His laws are straight, truthful, and easy. His Ummah is the best of the communities. No human has a higher status than his, and no creature can attain his status.

He is the last of the Prophets and their leader, the most knowledgeable among them and the highest in status, the most articulate and the strongest, the most beautiful, brave, courageous, and generous. He had the most signs among them and the most outstanding miracles.

All the prophets were people of merit and patience, belief and certainty, truthfulness and religiousness, chastity and impeccability, intelligence and brilliance, trustworthiness; and conveyance of the message. The prophets were numerous, the first of them was Adam, peace be upon him, who was created from clay as an unimpaired human in the best of forms. After him among his offspring are: ****h, Idris, Nuh, Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, Ibrahim, Lut, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub, Yusuf, Musa, Harun, Yeshu'a, Yunus, Ayyub, Dhu-l-Kifl, Ilyas, Alyasa', Dawud, Sulayman, Zakariyya, Yahya, 'Isa, al-Khadir, and many others.

Their religion is one: Islam (Tawheed), submission to Allah's

will, but their laws was different. They are the best of Allah's creations. They are alive, praying in their graves. They are mediators who intercede on the Day of Judgment, and the intercession of our prophet is the greatest.

The summation of all what was mentioned in the 'Aqidah named Al-Murshidah and in this supplement is included in the hadith of the Messenger of Allah, sall-Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam: "Iman is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and Destiny, in what is good and what is evil. This hadith is sahih, and is related by Muslim.

Knowing the law

Introduction:

As to the matter of law, throughout Islam's history there had been many schools of Islamic legal thoughts and all such schools rose on the difference of their interpretations of law-texts, of the two foundations: Holy Quran and Sunnah. Among those schools, the greatest four schools survive to this day, which are Hanafi named after the greatest of the Islamic jurists named Imam Abu Hanifah, the Shafi School, named after another great jurist, Imam Shafi, the Maliki, named after Imam Malik ibn Anas, and the Hanbali School named after Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. These four schools had developed a rich heritage of Islamic jurisprudence, covering numerous topics of worship, business, punishment, trade, military and governance, and so on. Each school agrees on many issues,

yet they also differ on many issues, but NO school ever contradicted the principles of Islamic law, which are the Islamic texts of Holy Quran and, the established hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad (saas). As each school has developed very sophisticated system of legal ruling, they are independent and have founded each of their own legal craftsmanship and judicial process, and all this culminates in to a mazhab, i.e. Islamic school of legal thought, and a Muslim can follow any one of the mazhab, because each mazhab has its own process of legal research. A Muslim cannot follow some from here and some from there, as it would be not in harmony. As throughout Islamic history great Islamic leaders adopted for their territories one of the four Islamic legal schools, it has settled in that way, for example the Saudi state adopting the Hanbali mazhab. The majority of Muslims follow themselves the Hanafi Mazhab, because the Ottoman Empire and the Mogul sultanate adopted the Hanafi mazhab and for this it spread throughout Asia and the subcontinent. Anyhow, a Muslim needs to follow one school of legal thought, and Islamic jurists has the ability to extract rulings on the basis of the legal process of their schools, on the basis of his scholarly understanding, on the condition that the process revolves within the evidences of Holy Quran and Hadeeth. Let us make the concept of mazhab a bit clearer:

Sheikh Nuh Keller an American Muslim, a philosopher and Islamic legal expert says:

'The word madhhab is derived from an Arabic word meaning "to go" or "to take as a way", and *refers to a mujtahids choice in regard to a number of interpretive possibilities in deriving the rule of Allah from the primary texts of the Qur'an and hadith on a particular question*. In a larger sense, a madhhab represents the entire school of thought of a particular mujtahid Imam, such as Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i, or Ahmad--together with many first-rank scholars that came after each of these in their respective schools, who checked their evidences and refined and upgraded their work. The mujtahid Imams were thus explainers, who operationalized the Qur'an and Sunna in the specific shari'a rulings in our lives that are collectively known as fiqh or "jurisprudence". In relation to our din or "religion", this fiqh is only part of it, for the religious knowledge each of us possesses is of three types. The first type is the general knowledge of tenets of Islamic belief in the oneness of Allah, in His angels, Books, messengers, the prophethood of Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), and so on. All of us may derive this knowledge directly from the Qur'an and hadith, as is also the case with a second type of knowledge, that of general Islamic ethical principles to do good, avoid evil, cooperate with others in good works, and so forth. Every Muslim can take these general principles, which form the largest and most important part of his religion, from the Qur'an and hadith.

The third type of knowledge is that of the specific understanding of particular divine commands and prohibitions that make up the shari'a. Here, because of both the nature and the sheer number of the Qur'an and hadith texts involved, people differ in the scholarly capacity to understand and deduce rulings from them. But all of us have been commanded to live them in our lives, in obedience to

Allah, and so Muslims are of two types, those who can do this by themselves, and they are the mujtahid Imams; and those who must do so by means of another, that is, by following a mujtahid Imam, in accordance with Allah's word in surat al-Nahl, "Ask those who recall, if you know not" (Qur'an 16:43), and in surat al-Nisa, "If they had referred it to the Messenger and to those of authority among them, then those of them whose task it is to find it out would have known the matter" (Qur'an 4:83), in which the phrase those of them whose task it is to find it out, expresses the words "alladhina yastanbitunahu minhum", referring to those possessing the capacity to draw inferences directly from the evidence, which is called in Arabic "istinbat".

These and other verses and hadiths oblige the believer who is not at the level of istinbat or directly deriving rulings from the Qur'an and hadith to ask and follow someone in such rulings who is at this level. It is not difficult to see why Allah has obliged us to ask experts, for if each of us were personally responsible for evaluating all the primary texts relating to each question, a lifetime of study would hardly be enough for it, and one would either have to give up earning a living or give up one's din, which is why Allah says in surat al-Tawba, in the context of jihad:

"Not all of the believers should go to fight. Of every section of them, why does not one part alone go forth, that the rest may gain knowledge of the religion and admonish their people when they return, that perhaps they may take warning".

The slogans we hear today about "following the Qur'an and Sunna instead of following the madhhabs" are wide of the

mark, for everyone agrees that we must follow the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace). *The point is that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is no longer alive to personally teach us, and everything we have from him, whether the hadith or the Qur'an, has been conveyed to us through Islamic scholars. So it is not a question of whether or not to take our din from scholars, but rather, from which scholars.* And this is the reason we have madhhabs in Islam: because the excellence and superiority of the scholarship of the mujtahid Imams--together with the traditional scholars who followed in each of their schools and evaluated and upgraded their work after them--have met the test of scholarly investigation and won the confidence of thinking and practicing Muslims for all the centuries of Islamic greatness. The reason why madhhabs exist, the benefit of them, past, present, and future, is that they furnish thousands of sound, knowledge-based answers to Muslims questions on how to obey Allah. Muslims have realized that to follow a madhhab means to follow a super scholar who not only had a comprehensive knowledge of the Qur'an and hadith texts relating to each issue he gave judgements on, but also lived in an age a millennium closer to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and his Companions, when taqwa or "godfearingness" was the norm--both of which conditions are in striking contrast to the scholarship available today.

While the call for a return to the Qur'an and Sunna is an attractive slogan, *in reality it is a great leap backward, a call to abandon centuries of detailed, case-by-case Islamic scholarship in finding and spelling out the commands of the Qur'an and Sunna, a highly sophisticated, interdisciplinary effort by mujtahids* (one who is able to interpret the law),

hadith specialists, Qur'anic exegetes, lexicographers, and other masters of the Islamic legal sciences. To abandon the fruits of this research, the Islamic shari'a, for the following of contemporary sheikhs who, despite the claims, are not at the level of their predecessors, is a replacement of something tried and proven for something at best tentative.

The rhetoric of following the shari'a without following a particular madhhab is like a person going down to a car dealer to buy a car, but insisting it not be any known make-- neither a Volkswagen nor Rolls- Royce nor Chevrolet--but rather "a car, pure and simple". Such a person does not really know what he wants; the cars on the lot do not come like that, but only in kinds. The salesman may be forgiven a slight smile, and can only point out that sophisticated products come from sophisticated means of production, from factories with a division of labor among those who test, produce, and assemble the many parts of the finished product. It is the nature of such collective human efforts to produce something far better than any of us alone could produce from scratch, even if given a forge and tools, and fifty years, or even a thousand. And so it is with the shari'a, which is more complex than any car because it deals with the universe of human actions and a wide interpretive range of sacred texts. This is why discarding the monumental scholarship of the madhhab in operationalizing the Qur'an and Sunna in order to adopt the understanding of a contemporary sheikh is not just a mistaken opinion. It is scrapping a Mercedes for a go-cart."

To conclude this chapter it should be said, note this that, these legal differences are not a cause of Muslim disunity as

some may claim but rather these differences are a cause towards unity, because the four schools of legal thoughts have formed an encyclopaedia of Islamic legal heritage by generations after generations of sharp Muslim minds and thinkers of Islamic jurisprudence, which has laid down the boundary of Muslim lives to be lived in harmony, at times making it spacious for the law to be applied, yet at times dealing with different customs and cultures of people making it possible for human race to adopt a single school of thought suiting them and their place and thought. The Islamic legal thought didn't just bring up rulings from thin air but rather each legal school has developed fine harmony of its juristic principles which fall in harmony with the Holy Quran and Sunnah/Hadeeth, thereby proving that Islam is for all time and for all places. Not a single ruling to this day has contradicted any text of Holy Quran and or Sunnah, but rather either explained it and/or established new ruling on the basis of it. Those who thus call for the tearing down of schools of thoughts (i.e. mazhab in Arabic) are really calling for the annihilation of thousand years of Quranic and Hadeeth compendium of knowledge and scholarly masteries. So beware people from such who think they are calling to Holy Quran and Sunnah, yet at the same time eradicating the rich intellectual heritage of Islamic scholarly tradition and jurisprudence. They are by this calling for a new way in opposition of the past Islamic geniuses. The knowledge was passed by the Prophet (saas) to His companions then they passed to their followers and so on till there were four schools of legal thoughts which culminated all other schools

due to its power of thought and juristic superiority. Even the non-Muslims have a long tradition of their legal side and they are proud of it, but what prevents us from such pride except our blindness and the self deceived zeal of so called following of Holy Quran and Sunnah?

A Sufi cleric who can be the ideal Islamic cleric/scholar must then possess the knowledge of creed and law, mastering it so that he may guide others towards Islam or learning from it from another master thereby living under Islam building his thought and self.

Self-Purification (the Sufi way): general rules and the development of the self

General Rules

Imam Nawawi and Sufism

"The Rules of the Sufi Way"

7.1 The basic rules of the way of Sufism (def: 8.11) are five: 1. having godfearingness privately and publicly, 2. living according to the Sunnah in word and deed, 3. indifferences to

whether others accept or reject one, 4. satisfaction with Allah Most High in scarcity and plenty, and 5. turning to Allah in happiness or affliction.

1. Godfearingness is attained by scrupulousness and uprightness;
2. Following the Sunnah is attained through caution and good character;
3. Indifference to other's acceptance or rejection is attained through patience and trust in Allah;
4. Satisfaction with Allah is attained through contentment with what one has and submission to the will of Allah;
5. Turning to Allah Most High is attained by gratitude to Him in happiness and taking refuge in Him in affliction.

The Foundations of the Rules

7.2 the foundation of all of these consists of five things 1. high aspiration, 2. Keeping Allah's reverence, 3. giving the best of service, 4. Keeping one's spiritual resolves, and 5. Esteeming Allah's blessings.

1. Whoever's aspiration is high, his rank rises;
2. Whoever reveres Allah, Allah maintains his respect;
3. Whoever's service is goodly is necessarily shown generosity;
4. Whoever keeps his spiritual resolves continues to have guidance;
5. Whoever esteems Allah's blessings will be grateful for

them, and whoever is grateful for them will necessarily see them increased.

The Signs of Sufism

7.3 The principles of Sufism' signs on a person are also five: 1. seeking Sacred Knowledge in order to perform Allah's command; 2. Keeping the company of sheikhs and fellow disciplines in order to see with insight; 3. forgoing both dispensation from religious obligations and figurative interpretations of scripture, for the sake of cautiousness; 4. organizing one's time with spiritual works to maintain presence of heart; and 5. suspecting the self in all matters, in order to free oneself from caprice and be safe from destruction.

1. Seeking Sacred Knowledge is vitiated by keeping the company of juveniles, whether in age, mentality, or religion, who do not refer from guidance to a firm principal or rule;

2. Keeping the company of sheikhs and disciples is vitiated by self-deception and concern with the unimportant.

3. Leaving dispensations and figurative interpretations is vitiated by leniency toward the self;

4. Organizing one's time with spiritual works is vitiated by looking for more and more supererogatory worship.

5. Suspecting the self is vitiated by satisfaction at its

goodliness and uprightness.

Curing the ego.

7.4 The principles of curing the ego are also five: 1 lightening the stomach by diminishing one's food and drink; 2. taking refuge in Allah Most High from the unforeseen when it befalls; 3. shunning situations involving what one fears to fall victim to; 4. continually asking Allah's forgiveness (istighfar) and His blessings upon the Prophet (saw) night and day with full presence of mind; and 5. keeping the company of him who guides one to Allah."

Positive principles of self-purification

Principle 1

Repentance

Repentance is the beginning of the ways of the seekers (of Allah's closeness), and the key to the peace of the desirers of His pleasure. Allah says '**Indeed Allah loves the people who are repenting and He loves the people of purity**', and His saying '**And seek repentance to Allah all of you**'. The Prophet (saas) said '*The one who repents (sincerely) is the friend of Allah, and one who repents sincerely is like as if he has no sins*'.

The reality of repentance says, Imam Ghazzali: returning to Allah away from the path of distance (which takes you distant

from Allah), to the path of closeness (which takes you closer to Allah), but for that there is a condition, beginning and perfection.

As to its beginning: It is faith (Iman), and its meaning in this context is the bright light of knowing in the heart that sins are destroyers, and from this realization, the fire of fear and sadness arises, and from this fire results the truthfulness of yearning (to repent to Allah), being in awareness about the harm of sins when one meets it. The present then should be, your, leaving the sins, and as to the future, determination on leaving the sins, and as to the past, the acquirement of the realization of harm of sins you may have done, and with these three gradually perfection is acquired.

Know this that repentance is one of those obligatory deeds on each sane, adult, Muslim, and because a person with disbelief in his heart he doesn't repent. It has been mentioned in some hadeeth also that a person who sins yet repents sincerely to Allah, is much better than the one who doesn't sin, and do not repent. It should be known that not repenting to Allah itself is an act of ingratitude to Allah. Then there are stages of repenting, as each person is not the same in his sincerity in repenting. There are sinners whose repentance is a mockery to Allah, a game and a formality, just as the Christians who go to the church every Sunday and make a formal act towards their made-god, the idols. Allah doesn't need our sympathy. Yet there are those whose repentance fills the heavens and earth, with awe, for example the person who committed adultery in the lifetime of

Prophet (saas), and repented, but the companions of prophet (saas) couldn't see through it and they expressed dissatisfaction to that person, but on hearing this the holy Prophet (saas) said that if that person's repentance were to be distributed among you people, it would be enough for all of you to be forgiven. And haven't you read the hadeeth which states that Allah has created some angels only to remain prostrated to Him, and the time of their prostration has been so long that it is almost as if forgotten. It is also an act of repenting and if such are the angels, who are sinless, what about us? We are then in need of repentance more than them. Thus a servant varies in degree in his repentance. The holy Prophet (saas) whose all past and future was forgiven by Allah, used to repent to Allah more than seventy times each day! So ponder well O people who wish to acquire Allah's friendship. And what is the friendship of Allah except the greatest acquirement? Allah says in Hadeeth Qudsi that whoever shows envy or hatred towards any friends of Allah, Allah declares war on him! And He the Al-Mighty says in hadeeth Qudsi, that a servant who is sincere and also repenting, if he walks towards Allah, Allah runs towards him, i.e. if he desires Allah by a degree Allah bring him closer by a degree greater. Ponder well then.

Imam Ghazzali states that one needs to be repenting towards Allah in each state of his existence, as if when he is overwhelmed by the remembrance of Allah, he will attain such level. This is a level which is not attained by one or two days but by self struggle, which is one of the aims of Sufism.

Only a servant who fears Allah and loves Him from within his heart can appreciate this, because the hadeeth mentions that if Allah were to judge among His creations strictly, not a single creation would escape His wrath, including the Prophets (pbuth)! The level of continuous repenting is a level indeed high and fruitful, and it is not easy to be attained by every person.

Says, Imam Ghazzali that the repentance in relation to the heart is like soap to the cloth, it washes and makes it brighter, and cleaner. One should seek repentance to Allah with the hope that Allah will accept it, but not with hopelessness, neither with a guarantee.

When you will be on the path of seeking repentance to Allah in your prayer, after your prayer, and when you go to sleep, and when you wake up and so on, you will gradually be stronger and overwhelm the power of the sins, and gradually will be equipped with the arsenal of piety and Satan will flee from you, but know this Satan flees only to come back later, so you must not let your guard down.

Imam Ghazzali says that, a man finds it difficult to flee sins because:

-the punishment of Allah is not like money which comes like that, and the nature of human is inclined towards that which he can attain and see, in present. To cure this nature, he must think about that what will come from Allah as punishment even though it doesn't come just like that, can come in a blink

of an eye, yet one is unaware of it. He must think that death is closer to a man than his shoe-lace, thus what makes you think that it won't happen right now while you are reading this, or at the end of the day or tomorrow?

-pleasure of sins and pleasures of the world is severe on the human self, and he may find it hard to leave it. Let him think then that if a Christian doctor were to inform him that a cool drink will harm him and lead him towards death yet that drink is very tasty and pleasing to the throat, wouldn't he leave it? Let him then know that Allah and Prophet (saas) is more truthful than that Christian doctor, and the eternal suffering in hell is more severe than the disease which brings you closer to death.

-he may think that he will repent tomorrow or, after some years or at his old age. Let him ask himself what makes him so sure that he will live for the next few hours?

-he may think that he will be good and nice to himself and people. Let him think that not belittling yourself towards Allah by repentance is one of the forms of arrogance and pride against Allah.

-he may be in uncertainty about life after death, but know this; this is disbelief (kufr). The solution is knowledge of Allah and His book, His creation, knowing His Prophet (saas), and seeking help to Allah.

Repentance is for all sins whether big (kabeera) sins, or small (sageera) sins. Small sins will gather in you and destroy you

while you may not know if you are taking small sins lightly. The Prophet (saas) said that a servant sees sins as if a great mountain falling over him.

Principle 2

Fear followed by awe

(Khauf in Arabic)

Allah says '**Guidance and Mercy for those, they are in awe towards their Lord**', and '**Indeed, the people of wisdom from the servants of Allah, are in awe towards Allah**'.

The holy Prophet (saas) said '*the head of wisdom is the awe of Allah*'.

Know this that the awe of Allah is a fear for Allah followed by humility and high love towards him. It is as if a wife who shows her fear towards her husband yet loving him, and knowing his love for her. The awe for Allah is even greater.

Says, Imam Ghazzali, know this that the reality of fear (awe) is the inner pain of the heart and it's burning (as in a moved heart) for thinking about what is hated, to perform in future. This fear may be due to the flow of sins, and may be from Allah when one knows of Allah, His attributes which obligates fear, and this is a complete form, because one who realizes

Allah will necessarily be in fear of Him, and this is a higher fear, a fear realized in the higher levels of one's worship, acquired by wisdom, **'Indeed, the people of wisdom from the servants of Allah, are in awe towards Allah'**, and the saying, of Prophet (saas) *'I am most fearful to Allah, than you all'*, a fear which made Prophet (saas) not to mention the Holy name of Allah while in a state of non-ablution.

Thus know this that the knowing of Allah with the correct knowing will make you fear him with a dignity, a dignity which is a direct result of worship. Have the world not seen the dignity of Shia Imam Khomeini, in respect of the self-arrogant dignity of the infidel leaders? Such dignity on awe is a result which is manifested in the way the worshipper interacts with the world, a dignity which touches people's heart. Why will not it come when you have known Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Majesty and Dignity? The more purely you know of Allah the more pure is your awe acquired. O servant of Allah don't be shocked by this but was there not people of Allah whose very words and sights captured the hearts of millions, even though at this day of ours we rarely see them. Example of them were the holy Prophets (pbuth) and pious men of the ancient times, and Sufism is a way to that, for those who have understood and has been merced by Allah!

Imam Ghazzali then mentions the pathways to attain this awe, of which is:

-Knowing Allah, as He has intended in Holy Quran and Sunnah, free from the ignorance of anthromorphists (those who think of Allah in human terms) and misguided.

-keeping good thought about Allah, and dying on it, so one should not say 'What have I done to Allah to have such a misfortune!', or 'Why Allah has to make people suffer!' These are all bad thoughts and bad beliefs about Allah, in fact disbelief.

-keeping high hope to Allah to attain the good things in hereafter and in this world which is just and necessary for the betterment of the soul, such as mercy of Allah, love of Allah, closeness to Allah.

Imam Ghazzali concludes by saying that the lowest level of fear is that which makes you leave sins, and taking you away from the diversions of world which diverts away from Allah, and His religion, and the oppressed and lost.

Principle 3

Abstinence

Allah says in Holy Quran **'Those who wishes the farming of hereafter (i.e. paradise), We increase in his farming, and those who wishes the farming of the world (the diversions of the world), we give it to him from it, and for him there is no portion in the hereafter (of paradise)',** and His saying, **'And the people of knowledge said: destruction be to you-**

the reward of Allah is better for the one who has faith and do good deeds’.

The result of knowledge can be abstinence, when you know and realize by knowing that the limitness and decay of the worldly things, giving it more importance that hereafter is nothing but an act of the foolish man. The Prophet (saas) said *‘the one who wakes up in the morning and his priority is the world, Allah makes his issue diverse...and the one who wakes up and his priority is the life after death, Allah gathers his needs, and protects his properties, and makes his heart rich...and glitters of world comes to him even though he is not interested in it’*. Know that Allah can change the time and its complexities even in a blink of an eye, so believe in Him.

When the Prophet (saas) was asked about the verse of holy Quran **‘to the one who Allah wishes to guide (to Him), He opens it towards Islam’**: and about the meaning of the word ‘opens’ (sharh). He said: *‘the light (of faith) when it enters the heart...the heart opens up and becomes spacious’*. It was said: is there any sign for that? He (saas) said: *‘Yes’ ‘being uninterested about the life of deceit (world), and interest towards the life of eternity’, and being prepared for death before it comes’*. The Prophet (saas) said *‘when Allah wishes for a servant good, He makes him abstain (the excesses of the world), and makes him want the hereafter, and makes him see the faults and sins of his own self’*.

Says Imam Ghazzali that the reality of abstinence is: reluctance of the self towards the world...

Its root is the knowledge and light which enlightens the inner self, and the realization that the hereafter is better than the world. Its fruit is being satisfied by the world according to one's necessity. Imam Ali (ra), the fourth caliph said 'Indeed Allah has made the leaders of guidance (i.e. Islamic scholars, leaders of Muslim nation) they being like the people with the lowest state of livelihood, so that the rich may follow them...' Look at the lives of the four caliphs, the leaders of guidance, who spread Islam throughout the lands by Islamic military and wars of justice, winning wealth and riches, yet they abstained from it, keeping themselves in the minimum state of life as possible, so that world do not deceive them, in their leadership, and service towards Islam, and their own souls.

Imam Ghazzali mentions the levels of abstinence:

- One who abstains the glitters and temptations of the world yet yearning towards it while fighting against his inner desires and yearnings. This is the start of abstinence.

- One whose heart flees away from the world, and doesn't incline towards it.

- One who doesn't flee away from the world yet does not incline towards it, because he has defeated his desire for world, thus his wealth to him whether rich or poor, doesn't matter. He has realized the greatness of hereafter compared to world.

Know this that abstinence is not a thing which makes you leave the world as if you do not exist in the world, rather the

abstinence of the world means, turning your face from such which tempts you towards worldly pleasures making your heart covered from the greatness and richness of hereafter. Abstinence is the level when you will exist in the world yet you will not think it as something great, when you will realize that it is a point of your journey towards Allah, where Allah has discharged for you a duty for Him. Abstinence is not giving up the world, that it makes you lose your way in it, making you dependent on the people of the world who are soaked in its pleasures. You will exist in it, yet it will not eat your heart. Your abstinence is a shield which makes you use the rich, which you may acquire, to be spent in Allah's cause and on yourself as much as your necessity. Abstinence is not separation from the world but a balance, and definitely it is not embracing the world either. It is a state acquired, by some higher factors of spiritualism, thus do not enforce yourself, and you will know what to do when you realize through worship and acquirement of other principles, what is higher than your existence, and the existence of this pathetic world. Spiritualism is a state acquired but not an action enforced.

Principle 4

Patience

Allah says '**And be patient, for Allah is with those who are patient**', and '**Verily, the people who are patient will be rewarded with an unlimited reward**'.

The Prophet (saas) said '*Patience is half of faith*'. And '*Patience is one of the treasures from the treasures of paradise*'.

Says Imam Ghazzali, that the children of Adam have been given two great forces: intellect i.e. the rational mind, which is of the armies of Allah, and Angels, and the other is, vanities and temptations, which is of the armies of the devils. It should be noted carefully that patience establishes the balancing factor in a human so that the two opposite extremes are kept in its proper measure, thereby not making human a being who only thinks, and has no temptations such as sex, or something, neither making human a machine of temptations, who have lost grip of his mind, thereby breaking the thin thread of differentiating between moral and immoral. The greater patience equips the man with a greater insight by separating the rational and the temptational part of human in two opposite extremes, thereby not mixing it and destroying the balance.

Know this that patience is of three types: the first is a must for each servant of Allah, which is being patient from committing sins, then the second is for the higher worshippers such as being patient when stricken by hunger and poverty, for the sake of Allah, and not taking the path of sins. The third is the highest patience, which is that of the

people of abstinence, who are patient from the taste of the world even though it may be permissible.

Know this patience for the sake of Allah is the defence in the spiritual war between the good and the evil; therefore be well to strengthen your defence, the defence against the evil in the greatest of war- the war of spiritual existence. Patience tames your heart and makes it mature and stable so that it doesn't fall in to something harmful, in haste. In great hunger, a man may be forced to eat pork, as is permitted by Islamic law, when there are no permissible foods, and in this case for example patience will make you eat as much as is needed of the pork to save yourself, unlike those impatient people of desires, who engulfs the pork forgetting their needed limit, and taking a taste from the forbidden. The non-existence of patience will make him appreciate the taste of this forbidden thing which may take him to annihilation from within. So ponder well, and sharpen your defence.

One can strengthen his defence, by knowledge of Allah, and learning the great histories of the Prophets, taking lessons from their holy lives, your heart must be touched and respond with sadness to their lives, so that it is purified, because whenever you are sad and sympathetic to the people who are oppressed, especially those who were and is in the path of Allah, you will attain a spiritual light in you which will instill in you a stronger defence, one of which and the most powerful is patience. Thus knowledge and in this case the special knowledge i.e. knowledge of Allah and the lives of pious men, will help you greatly in acquiring greater

patience. Knowing about the tyrants tyranny, and suffering at their hands by the innocent may also help you. Realizing the envy and hatred of the infidels and enemies of Islam against Islam and you being a Muslim, will also inspire you. In such way of knowing the special knowledge of religion and its great men throughout existence, may be a great benefit in increasing your patience, along with your effort to build it, Allah willing.

Principle 5

Thanksgiving

Allah says: **‘And few of my servants are thankful (to me)’**, and **‘And thank me and do not disbelieve in me’**, and His saying **‘What will Allah do with punishing you if you are thankful and believed (in Him)’**.

The Prophet (saas) said to His wife Ayesha (ra), when she said to him ‘what makes you cry to Allah when he has forgiven your past and future’? He (saas) replied *‘Will I not be a thanking servant?’*.

Know this that thanksgiving is done to Allah, and to people. The two are different in their nature, as thanksgiving to Allah is to be done on a continual daily basis, such as when he wakes up, when he goes to sleep, when he finishes his prayers, when he acquires a good thing in the world through lawful means, and so on. Thanksgiving to Allah must be

followed by love and awe towards Him, and is not a mere formal thanking as you may see today among people of government, or among people of disbelief. Thanksgiving to Allah is not a formality, and anyone who does in such a way is not thanking Allah, but sinning. There are people who thank a person of importance with great reverence, even belittling himself. If such is from a person to another person, what should be to Allah, the Lord of Dignity? In fact a Muslim must never humiliate himself by showing reverence to a sinner, or an infidel. Our thanksgiving to the non-Muslims must be formal, with Islamic dignity kept intact. Thanking people is done with respect and manners, which do not belittle our Islamic dignity. As to thanking Allah it is as has been said different. If you do not feel lowly in front of Allah, then know you have not learnt to respect Him, and have not known Him, and while thanking Allah or asking to Him, this is even more needed. The result of your being lowly to Allah is a result of reverence, awe and humility, which has been acquired from Allah as a gift, through your worship, so that you worship Him even in a deeper and higher state. Ponder this and in yourself very well.

Principle 6

Sincerity and Truthfulness

Says the wise Imam, Ghazzali, know this that for sincerity there is a reality, a root and a perfection. Its root is intention

and the intention which is free from defects and indecision, and the perfection of intention is truthfulness.

Intention: Allah say '**And don't push out those who invoke their Lord day and night, hoping for His face (i.e. nearness, and closeness)**'.

The meaning of intention is, desiring the face of Allah, which is to say desiring Allah's nearness and love. One doesn't seek the face of other except in a way of desire which is special, desiring the other in the highest way of desire hoping for his attention. The Prophet (saas) said '*Actions are (rewarded), according to the intentions (behind it)*'. Thus for example your prayer to show off people is not accepted, as your intention is to please people, but not Allah. Another example would be that if two men are determined to kill one another, and one is killed by the other, then, both are in hellfire, as has been stated by the Prophet (saas), because He (saas) mentioned the reason being that the killed wanted to kill the killer too. This is one face, but do not generalize.

The reality of intention is a determined desire to act with the ability at one's disposal, and such desire is awaken in oneself, by one's knowledge. Know this all your deeds, is not being correct except without by physical ability, desire to act and knowledge of the action, for example fasting, or jihad, or even having sexual intercourse with your wife.

Know this, that your actions, such as prayer, fasting, jihad, spending etc is nothing at all to Allah unless it is followed by

the intention, an intention directed to please Allah and attain His love and friendship. The Prophet (saas) said that Allah doesn't see our looks and physical form, but He looks at our hearts and deeds. The heart is preceded before deeds, so ponder well, and know this Sufism is more in to the purification of heart than the deeds, for if the heart is enlightened, the deeds will follow. An enlightened pure heart if does a small deed is better than a tainted heart with many deeds. A pure heart will purify your deeds, and your external manifestation. So know this very well, that, the lowering of your forehead towards the earth is not the lowering of it in truth, but the humility and awe of the heart, and the body reflects the heart. Also for example, paying zakat is not eradicating your ownership, but the eradication of the filth of stinginess. Also the slaughtering of animals is not for the sake of its meat and blood, but rather honouring and feeling a respect and awe for the signs of worship, the signs of Allah.

You should know that by force intention is not attained, because any force on your heart will backfire. Imam Ali (ra), the fourth caliph, the man filled with wisdom, said 'Give your hearts rest, for indeed if it is coerced it will become blind'. How many of so called mystics have been a symbol of extremity in worship, rather than a proof of mysticism's great heights?

Know this sincerity is that when your intention makes you contribute your deed for one aim and goal, and in the context of servitude, it will be Allah. Thus your one unique existence of the purpose in your heart is to please Allah, and nothing

connecting with this one unique purpose, such as praying prayer yet you think of what would you do about so and so problem at the same time, even if you do so while you are in prayer, for the least moment.

As to truthfulness it has levels:

-Truthfulness in all the states of your being. Even for example if you say like 'be careful of this, it may harm you'. This statement is also in contradiction of truth, as you have warned without being certain, even though such doesn't fall under pure lie. Then for example you say in your prayer 'Indeed I have turned my face...(Inni Wajjahtu Wajhiwa...), yet you have with yourself something other than Allah. It is also a form of lie.

-Truthfulness in intention, free from any doubt or defects which may make it glow lesser.

-Truthfulness in determination, which doesn't revolve around weakness and confusion, indeterminateness.

-Truthfulness in fulfilling what you have determined to accomplish. For example you have determined to do such and such for Islam, yet when your death nears, weakness takes over your heart and you lose it. Living examples are the deeds of the four caliphs, especially Imam Ali (ra). One modern day example would be, that of the Shia Imam Khomeini who at his old age while after having the heart operation, being in hospital bed made it sure that the functioning of the new Islamic regime is active and the new

Islamic constitution well implemented. He didn't leave it on others.

-Truthfulness in deeds, which do not contradict what, is in your heart relating such deeds such as one who walks gently directs to the gentleness of his heart.

-The highest state of truthfulness in Islam and that is for example, being in awe for Allah, hope towards His love and mercy, love and being pleased for Allah and whatever He has bestowed on you, and so on.

Such are the levels which Imam Ghazzali mentions, and acquiring all of these is a great leap to the heights of mysticism, close to Allah.

Principle 7

Putting trust on Allah

Allah says in Holy Quran '**On Allah must the believers put their trust in**'.

Imam Ghazzali states the reality of putting trust in Allah is 'an expression of a state which is manifested out of Faith, oneness of Allah (Tawheed)', and whose effects are manifested on deeds and it is three pillars: Knowledge, state and deeds.

The first is unity of Allah, and having knowledge about Allah, and knowing that Allah is the All-Powerful, Dominating on everything. One who says the word of Kalima, i.e. Iman and believes in it from the sincerity and truthfulness of his heart, and when it is deep rooted in his heart the state of trust in Allah is revealed. Believe in the oneness of Allah have four levels:

The first being saying the words of faith 'there is one God only and Muhammad is His Messenger, Allah has got not partners, for Him is the Kingdom and dominion, and the law, and He is able to do all things'. When one utters this word only by mouth, then he has uttered it only, and this is the belief of the hypocrites.

The next being belief by the heart with firm conviction. It must be the belief of every Muslim.

The next is realizing and foreseeing in the depths of creations that Allah is the only power-bringing Being, and this can be done by the study of philosophy, logic and scholastic theology (ilm Al-Kalam). It is attaining the higher knowledge of Allah, differentiated from the general mass.

The fourth is the state of being when a servant attains direct experiences from Allah, which cannot be expressed by words or by the rational mind, due to its inability, but whose effects are wide and spacious, expressing words of deep wisdom and acts of high esteem. This is the level when one absorbs himself with the unity of Allah, meaning he doesn't look in to

things other than Allah, as if he has become one of the imperial guards of Allah, to whom only the King matters. Do not take this level lightly for few reach it. Knowledge must follow deeds, because to get in the imperial guards, you must prove yourself practically and not only staunch idealism will do.

Know this trusting in Allah means along with the act of the heart, the seeking of the means through the acts of the limbs. Thus seek the means to the end, and not be like a fool who trusts in Allah and sits in a corner hoping for him to work things out, neither be the fool who believes in pure action and considers belief in Allah as pointless. The former is a fool in the pragmatic way, while the latter is a fool in the ways of wisdom, failing to realize the higher forces driving matters, and histories. For the former fool, he must look in to the lives of the holy Prophets (pbuth). Their lives was not sitting in a corner and trusting in Allah, but they even after being the highest ranked servants of Allah, not only worked for livelihood, or attaining an aim, but they shed their blood. Angels didn't come for them and didn't do the hard things for them, generally. As to the latter fool, he must know that his practical mind void of faith is like a machine without gravity. The machine thinks it works and fails to see the higher force surrounding it i.e. gravity. These practical fools of today, who made, work their main motto sidelining faith on the shelves in the mosques, have failed to perceive the higher existence surrounding them, i.e. Allah. These fools should know the greatest practical material minded people i.e. the

communists couldn't stop the people of faith in Afghanistan in the Afghan war, nor the revolution in Iran in 1979, rather it fell at the end and now communism which states work is life, life is work, has become a historical idea only, yet faith still lives on and will do to. The servants of Allah must believe in Allah, should seek the means, yet know that Allah can change the flow of events just with in a blink of the eye. The wisest among His servants know this, and thus the four levels of belief as mentioned a while ago. The level of trust in Allah varies from minimum to maximum, the minimum is the level of the people who may have a doubt in their hearts, are fearful and weak, because ignorance has spread in them, ignorance about Allah. The servants of Allah must realize this that there is a difference between the power acquired and the power itself. The godless knows that whatever he has of power is the power itself in him, yet the servants of Allah knows that whatever is the power in him is acquired from Allah. Trust in Allah not only guides us but enlightens us in taking and judging the better means towards the ends.

Patience 8

Loving Allah

Allah says **'Say: If you fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and wives and relatives, the wealth you acquire...are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger...'**

The Prophet (saas) said '*None of you believe until Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to you than other things..*'

Imam Al-Hasan Basri the great Sufi cleric and jurist said 'The one who has known Allah (with the real knowing)...will love Him, and one who has known the world (with the real knowing)...will abstain from it...'

Says Imam Ghazzali: all that is pleasing is loved, and the meaning of that being loved is the inclination of the heart towards it, and if the inclination is intense and powerful it is termed as '*ishq*', special love. If the heart turns away from it then it is known as that thing being disliked, hated, despised, on the basis of the intensity of the turning away, and the thoughts related to it.

One can love a thing from heart expressed in to limbs, such as seeing a beautiful thing, eating a tasty food, smelling sweet fragrance etc. Some are not expressed by the five senses but are realized-its beauty-by the sixth sense-, such as the prayer. The Holy Prophet (saas) said '*...beautified for me in my eyes is the prayer (salat)*'. The five senses do not perceive the reality of the prayer, either by seeing, or smelling or touching, or hearing and so on.

The servants of Allah on the high ascent of mysticism, loves Allah, and feels His presence and attains the level of Ihsan gradually, as directed by the hadeeth which explains Ihsan as 'worshipping Allah as if you see Him, and if you can't then realizing that He sees you'. The love of such a servant then is

purely for the sake of Allah, who loves prophets (pbuth) because they love Allah, who loves their followers because they follow them for sake of Allah. Such a servant loves food because it prepares him to worship Allah, he loves drinks because it quenches his thirst and makes him realize Allah's love for His servants, loves his wife because Allah has given her as a mercy and a, peace of heart and body, and so on, so all things returning to Allah, and his continuous awareness of Allah's love for Him, and his love towards Allah, gradually purifying his spirit, the spirit which Allah has injected in mankind. Allah says '**And blown in him (Adam) from my spirit**'

Know this, to love Allah, you need to know Him with a pure knowing free from human attributes and literalism, and knowing someone has levels, thus the more you know of Him as allowed by Holy Quran and Sunnah as exposed by scholastic theology, the more it will be easier to love Him, worship Him and be in His awareness, with a greater sight. Therefore on all of you, is to study the basic principles of knowing Allah from <http://muhammadibnkateb.weebly.com/> <http://www.religionislam.weebly.com/> in English, Jawharatu Tawheed by Imam Baijuri in Arabic, Taweel Mushkil Hadeeth wa bayanuhu by Imam ibn Furak, in Arabic, Ihya uloom deen by Imam Ghazzali in Arabic. It seems Arabic language is the key you all should acquire.

Pleasure and destiny

The prophet (saas) said 'Allah said: I am Allah, there is no lord except me worthy of worship. Whoever doesn't show patience on my trials and tribulations, and doesn't show gratitude towards my blessings and mercies, and doesn't show pleasure to what I have decided of destiny (for a servant)...let him seek another lord except me'

How many of the glorious prophets of Allah were slaughtered by the cursed Jews, yet those holy Prophets (pbuth), bore with patience that befallen on them from Allah as trials and tribulations. As to the ancient Muslims, followers of the past Prophets (pbuth), our prophet (saas) said that they were tortured to the extent that their flesh was torn apart from their bones by iron combs, yet still they uttered 'Allah is my Lord'. They were only persecuted for their religion. Know this the ancient times was a time of religion, unlike today, but indirectly the servants of Allah may be persecuted, for harming the so called freedom. Those hard times of our past brethren are living examples of how we should be pleased with Allah's decree and trials. Realize this that through this Allah will only love you more, and increase your rank in the eternal life, a rank which will make the Angels salute you!

Unless you acquire zeal of faith, and a realization of the religious heights, your heart will be blind to those higher meanings of human existence. The key is knowledge of Allah, Islam and pondering, standing in deep isolation of spiritual

presence, at night and worshipping Allah. Gradually the result will appear, Allah willing.

Principle 10

Death

Allah says '**...wherever you are death will grasp you even though you are in the heights of the palaces**'.

Man forgets the death when he starts thinking of high things in life, is ambitious, and hopeful for a brighter future in his life. These things keep him busy and makes him turn away from the final point i.e. death. It is his weakness, yet he claims he is powerful. Conquering these vanities is a proof of his inner power, of his spiritual humanhood. He needs to hope for the things of afterlife, and this hope of attaining paradise must drive him in the world, and will make a balance of his activities and form a relationship with the world unlike the relationships of those who have forgotten their own souls. He needs to think about the punishments in the grave, a punishment which takes place in a dimension which we do not perceive. He needs to think about the hellfire, the eternal place for the damned and cursed ones. He needs to give importance and be touched by such. He needs to keep free from the whims of his minds, and imaginations, by not attaching an imaginary existence of such unseen realities, lest he may be misguided and lose the grip of their real existence.

Negative principles of self-purification

Principle 1

One's nourishment

The Holy Prophet (saas) said *'There is not a single deed which is more loved by Allah than hunger and thirst'*, and his saying, *'None will enter kingdom of heaven who fills his belly in excess'*, and *'head of deeds is hunger'*. When the glitters of the world were denied from the Prophet (saas), he said *'No, but rather I will remain hungry a day and be satisfied a day...'*

First know this many verses of Holy Quran and Sunnah (Hadeeth), if taken literally will misguide you, and you will end up in ignorance of the intent of worship and servitude of Allah, therefore wisdom is sought for years in learning any subject and for that matter the religion of Allah, is more entitled to be spent time on by the seekers of wisdom. Allah says in Holy Quran **'Whoever is given wisdom has been given a great good'**.

So to start it should be that, we shouldn't understand from such narrations of Prophet (saas), that Islam discourages eating, but rather Islam encourages a balance, a balance which is for higher worship, as Sufism is a pathway to higher worship, unlike worship done by the people who sin, or are ignorant, or whose amount of worship is little, or immature still. Thus the balance is that which do not harm your body and prevent you from worship and your work for livelihood,

and seeking wisdom and knowledge, a balance which makes you feel for the hungry, makes love in your heart for the suffering and oppressed and know this will make you yearn to sacrifice your portion for the sake of Allah and His love, to those poor hungry oppressed and lost people of the world, who yearns guidance yet no one is there to guide them towards Allah.

Says the great Imam Ghazzali (ra) that the evils of excess eating and drinking is the empowering and intensifying of the sexual desire which makes one yearns to earn the things to satisfy this desire excessively, such as gathering of wealth, and in this gathering of wealth man falls in the circle of social rank and class, which can lead to arrogance and self prejudice. Thus the excess of eating and drinking is a cause towards evil, which a wise servant of Allah should try to tame, thereby taming his sexual desire, but know this eradicating it is forbidden in Islam, as marriage is part of our prophet's Sunnah, and through marriage Muslims will increase in numbers and serve Allah and cause of justice.

The fruits of hunger and thirst are great of which are attainment of the simple heart, pure heart, perception of higher values of human existence and Allah's creation, abandonment of arrogance, and acquirement of humility, ability of less sleeping at night thereby allowing us for more worship in the depths and isolation of night when, the mercy of Allah is even closer to us, resulting for the servant of Allah, being satisfied by little in this world, and hoping great things for Islam and Muslims. Indeed hunger and thirst are from the

trials of paradise, as is found in the life of not only our leader Prophet Muhammad (saas) but almost all Prophets (Pbuth) of Allah that we know of. Thus metaphorically hunger and thirst is one of the doors to paradise. In hunger and thirst the truth of a servant's patience and perseverance tested, thus the higher worshippers of Allah is trained militarily by the spirit of faith, in one side, and are consistent on this way towards Allah's pleasure.

Imam Ghazzali do not possess extremist ideas about worship unlike some who call themselves a Sufi cleric or a Sufi, as he says that hunger and thirst is not enforced either or oneself or other, but should be attained through the acceptance of heart, in gradual steps, as if each day or each week, or each month or year a servant learns to give up eating and drinking more and more till he is satisfied by minimum because he divides diet in to the level where one eats and drinks as much as he needs, then eating and drinking by which he doesn't become an excess sleeper and lazy, and lastly, the minimum diet, which neither satisfies him fully nor keeps him unable to act. The Imam says the time of eating and drinking are also either three times a day, then to two times and lastly to one. He then divides diet (food and drink) as diet which is prevalent among the general people and can be accessed by such, and then the special diet which the general people cannot have access to, and lastly the costly diet which is only accessed by the few elites.

Principle 2

The abstinence of the tongue

Allah says in Holy Quran '**..And speak to people good...**'. The Holy Prophet (saas) said *'One who safeguards what is between his lips (or moustache and beard) i.e. tongue and his legs i.e. sexual organ, I will be a means (a guarantor) for him towards paradise'* and his saying *'One who is silent...is saved'*, i.e. one who abstains from evil and unnecessary talks and rumours, and his saying *'The most sins (committed) by the children of Adam is in their tongue'*. Narrated by Anas (ra), a companion of Prophet (saas), that a mother once spoke to his martyred son, giving him the glad tidings of paradise, and on hearing the Prophet (saas) said *'And what tells you (such. Perhaps he used to talk that which didn't concern him and prevented that which didn't harm him'?*

Imam Ghazzali defines 'talk which do not concern you' as: Which if left wouldn't cause reward (*Sawab* as is known amongst Bengalis) from Allah to be perished...

The Imam mentions five ways by which the tongue can commit its sins: Lie, backbiting, non-constructive criticism and futile argument, praise and joking (sinful).

Lie: To lie is forbidden. This is the general law, and the exception is considered. It is considered a lie even if a mother says something to his child such as 'come and I will give you chocolate', in the hope of bringing her child to her. Lie is permitted when if saying the truth causes a result which is

even more severe in sin than the sin of lie itself. It is based on the analogy of many other evidences of Islam and one of them is analogy on the basis of the permissibility of a hungry man fearing death out of hunger to eat pig meat. The chapter of Islamic legal analogy (known as *Qiyas*) is a vast area of study in Islamic Jurisprudence and this is not a place to discuss it. Islamic Law (Shariah) allows to lie in places such as 'to lie for the sake of reconciling between two Muslims or Muslim to a infidel, or infidel to an infidel, if the result of not lying will be unnecessary bloodshed, then in time of war for example Islamic army against the infidel army, and then a husband lying to his wife to prevent divorce, for example. One of the aims of Islamic law is to construct justice, stability and Islamic reign, whether in our lives or societies or nations.

Backbiting: Allah states in Holy Quran '**Do not backbite one another**'. Imam Ghazzali defines it on the basis of Holy Quran and Sunnah saying: Backbiting is saying something about a *Muslim* which he dislikes and would dislike if he were to hear it, even if it was true whether about a defect in him, or his knowledge, or clothing or actions and so on. Even if a Muslim were to say in front of *other Muslims* (note that it is a major sin to belittle a Muslim in front of a non-Muslim), 'May Allah forgive such and such for such and such deeds' intending to announce or expose his defect, or sins, publicising it. If he were to pray for such a sinful person he would do privately without publicising his sins or defects. The holy Prophet (saas) said '*Allah forbade...that a Muslim should be thought in bad terms*'. It should be said just as lying in backbiting there

are exceptions, and Imam Ghazzali mentions the legal validity of it. He states:

- The oppressed mentions about the oppressor in front of the head of Islamic nation or Islamic judge so that the oppressor's oppression can be stopped and justice established.

- Mentioning the evil of some one or a group or sect, if such is done to warn people so that they are not affected by him or them, and if mentioning such will prevent him or them from continuing their evils.

- If one is in need to mention something whether a defect or sin to an Islamic judge or ruler to know a ruling of Islam about it, such as wife of Muwaiya (ra), came to the holy Prophet (saas) and complained about her husband's stinginess that he doesn't spend enough on her and her child. The Prophet (saas) then commanded her to take of his wealth as much as is needed without his knowledge.

- Warning the Muslims the evil of a certain person so that he is not accepted as a witness in Islamic court, or Islamic dealings which require witness.

- If a person has a defective name then he can be called with such a name such as Shaitan (satan) Taq, a thinker in Islamic history. But Islam encourages having good names, Islamic names.

-If a person is openly displaying his defect or evils, and do not mind being mentioned by the people, such as the wine drinker, killer, or homosexual and so on.

-Imam Al-Hasan stated that three people are there who can be talked about and it is not backbiting, 'A heretic about his heresy, a sinner manifest in his sins and transgressions and an unjust ruler'.

Imam Ghazzali then proceeds to mention how to prevent oneself from backbiting. One should remember Allah's hell, the punishment in it, and that he will die one day. He should hope for paradise. He should not be in company of the people who just want to talk for the sake of criticism and belittling, other people. It can be acquired by patience, and by not engaging in unnecessary argument, an argument which voids knowledge, logic and a purpose.

Criticism and argument: The holy Prophet (saas) said '*A person doesn't attain the reality of faith unless he leaves criticism, even though he is entitled to do so*'. What is the reality of this? Imam Ghazzali defines: Showing opposition to another's talk, by manifesting a defect in it either in words or in meaning. One should leave such, because he seeks to boast his intellectual superiority. Would you engage with an uneducated person in argument in front of people in order to refute him and show your superiority, even though it will be called an argument? But if the ignorant person asks you the reason of something then you can establish an argument being in the position of a teacher. This is praised and is the

art of imparting knowledge, and knowledge is the most important thing for a Muslim, the first being knowledge of Allah and Iman and obligatory religious deeds and forbidden ones, then knowing the necessary law of inheritance, so that you do not leave your heirs anything unjustly. Thus criticism and arguments must have a valid purpose; a purpose which if attained will benefit the arguer and clarify the argued. For example the Shia Imam Khomeini refuting anti-Islamic people's voices against the Islamic government and the revolution, states that there is a difference between criticism and incitement, so understand this very well. Imam Ghazzali has pointed this in a clear way in his book when he generally clarifies the valid and invalid existence of criticism and arguments. This principle must be known by the Sufi clerics.

Joking: Extremity in joking causing laughter makes the spiritual side of a Muslim to die gradually. It causes the disappearance of dignity and religious zeal. But simplicity in joking is allowed, and sometimes joking is praised, such as with your wife, or children and relatives, on the condition that sins are not resulted, either by the tongue or other limbs, or any evil thoughts which may result from within the heart, because heart is the runway of sins, and tongue and limbs are the sky. Our leader the holy Prophet (saas) said *'Indeed I joke yet I do not speak except the truth'*.

Praising: Praise can cause someone to mention something, which is not true, and it is flattery, and it may cause him to lie about the praised person hoping for his good eyes to him or hoping to make him known. It also causes the praiser to

express false love for the praised, causing the praised to take him in his close circles, yet he can be a potential enemy. It will result in the acquirement of self-pride for the praised making him arrogant, yet he will not know that he is deceived. The greater the praise, and the context, the more harmful can it be for the praiser and the praised. One should say such rather, 'I think so and so is nice, or so and so is wise, but Allah knows best', even though you are sure he is indeed nice and indeed wise. The Prophet (saas) said, *'Indeed Allah is angered when a tyrant/transgressor is praised'*. How many praise we do for those who are openly working against Allah, and Allah's religion, from among the democratic leaders, feminists, and secularists, who call themselves Muslims! Imam Al-Hasan (grandson of holy Prophet (saas)), said 'one who wishes for the transgressor a long life (or longevity of his rule), then he i.e. the praiser, has loved disobedience of Allah'.

Imam Ghazzali says then the matter of the praised: He mentions as mentioned before, that arrogance and haughtiness that can come in him, may destroy him. It can also make him self-pleased, making him lessen the good deeds. Once all the above mentioned things are to be sure of not coming in to existence whether from the praiser, or the praised, then one can praise another. Indeed the holy Prophet (saas) praised many of his companions. But there is a difference there, as the praise of holy Prophet (saas), is a praise for the guidance and goodness which exists in the praised, thus other Muslims may know about the guidance

and goodness. The Prophet's (saas) praising of others can also be an indirect indication for the Muslims to follow him in religious matters, or give him importance for religious matters, for example the Prophet's (saas) praise for Abu Bakr (ra), when the Prophet (saas) said that the balance of deeds of Abu Bakr weighted on one side of the balance will outweigh all the deeds of the Muslims, balanced on other side of the balance, or, for example, the praise of Prophet (saas), to Muaz ibn Jabal (ra) when he sent Muaz (ra) to Yemen for Islamic preaching, and many more like this. If however a person praises another person, which one needs to do for the interest of Islam and Muslims, then it is also permissible, such as praising the first four Caliphs, so that the Muslims are not deceived by the Shias' lies about them, or praising the great scholars of Islam to Muslims, so that those who blaspheme them cannot succeed in the campaign of lies, against them, such as some of the Salafis do to Imam Abu Hanifah, or Imam Fakhr Din Razi and so on.

The praised must never like having being praised, but must dislike it, as he should believe that his honour and whatever he is praised for is not possessed by him in truth, but rather a mercy of Allah. He must then remember the Lord of praise and dignity, Allah, and should flee the place of praise if he can, if someone were to praise him. The companions of Prophet (saas) used to hate being praised by people, but were filled with great joy if the holy Prophet (saas), were to praise them, because, they were always in an eagerness of being loved by Prophet (saas), and make him happy.

The praiser and the praised, must know the conditions mentioned above, before they are in the realm of praise.

Principle 3

Anger

Know this anger is like a fire from the flames of fire which engulfs the self in to annihilation. The management of anger is one of the important things in religion, and the Prophet (saas) said *'...indeed the powerful is the one who suppresses his anger when anger is about to spill out from within'*. Why will not the instruments of anger be checked and suppressed whence it carry the elements of violence, abuse and prolonging of the tongue in to evil words, and the tarnishing of the heart by envy and hatred? But know this that the essence of anger can never be diminished because it is needed sometimes for the religious good, as through anger can a warrior of Allah find courage to fight, and through anger can the evil be prevented from the evil persons, so what is needed is taming the anger and using it in its proper place. Will you not be angry on the devil that rebelled against Allah? Yes, indeed each Muslim should be angry on the devil and the evils of the ways of the devil, as without anger we cannot work for justice against the transgression, thus tame your anger and use it for the cause of religion, the true religion, Islam. There are yet Muslims who claim that they follow Islam but yet they have embraced the enemies of Allah, and they have not differentiated the enemy from the ignorant people, thus you will see the Muslims for not being

angry on the evil things and misusing their anger on the weak, have embraced the secular idea, the democratic dimension of the godless political system, the values of the sinners and the rejoice they find in embracing the arrogant persistent rebel against Islam, for example the feminists, or the secularists. Thus using anger in the proper place means using it for the sake of Islam, abstaining from using it on the weak and the people who mistake out of forgetfulness, so as Imam Ghazzali said, we must tame our anger like a hunting dog.

How can we tame our anger: the great Imam Ghazzali then proceeds to say in his book that the taming of the anger is done, firstly by acknowledging that you are a servant of Allah and your undue anger is a trait of rudeness in front of Allah. You need to remember that Allah is the King, who is the lord whose anger is done on those who disobey Him, therefore remind yourself that your anger, is not for you to rule, but must be ruled by Allah, which is to say spend your anger as Allah wants, spending it in the place where it is due, and abstaining from the places where it is not needed. You need to remind yourself that Allah's anger is greater than your anger. Through gradual effort you will see Allah has allowed you to rule over your anger, and that you will come to learn to tame anger through ablution, prayer, reciting holy Quran and so on. This may not come quick, but through self struggle (Jihad of nafs), and ruling the self by Allah's obedience and pleasure is the work of the best warrior (Mujahed), thus the

saying of the prophet (saas) whose intent is 'the greatest Jihad is the Jihad of the self (nafs)'.

Principle 4

Envy

Our leader, the holy prophet (saas) said that *'Envy eats the good deeds of a person as fire eats up the wood'*. The prophet Zakariyya (pbuh) said that Allah said **'The envious man is an enemy to my blessings, angry to my judgement, displeased by my distribution of my (blessings) which I distributed among my servants'**. Imam Ghazzali as is his method in his book always accurately defines each of the evils of the heart so he defines envy, and says envy is that you love to see the ceasing of Allah's mercy from others (which Allah has bestowed on them), or your desire to see that suffering/hardships fall on others through that mercy or blessings which Allah has bestowed upon them, but if you desire such blessings or is happy with it without wishing the ceasing of such from another, then this is not envy. But you can wish that blessings of Allah be ceased from others if those others use such blessings in sins, or for oppressions. To give an example, money which Allah may provide to people making them rich, if they use it to sin or in oppressions then you can desire it to cease from them. Because in truth you are not really wishing that the blessing be ceased but rather you are wishing that oppression or sins be ceased., and the sign of it is, if that person were to abstain from sins and transgression by using that certain blessing of Allah, you

wouldn't want it to be ceased from him, because he would have stopped from sinning and transgressing.

Imam Ghazzali then states how to cure the envy from the heart. He says that envy is a disease of the heart and the disease of the heart is not cured by any other medicine except knowledge and good deeds. Curing it by knowledge is that you knowing envy as harming yourself, without harming the one who is envied. Knowing that it is harming you by destroying your good deeds which you have done, and that you are being subjected to the displeasure of Allah by your latent confession that you are displeased with Allah's distribution of His blessings (ni'mat), which Allah bestowed from His treasures, and all that is in between heavens and earth is belonging to Allah.

It also harms your world, and not only religion. It harms your world by making you start hatred against that person whom Allah blessed with money or children or wealth. It makes you speak ill of him, it deceives you and incites you to achieve his wealth or money through haram (forbidden) means. All this is because you are envious and envy is a temptation towards sin.

Curing it by good deeds is that you are happy with what Allah has given you what you have acquired through lawful means, you are happy for others which Allah has given them. It is not for us to poke our noses in to the secrets of other people, and not for us to do a research of how other people have income his wealth, unless you are a ruler or a person whose duty

makes him do such for the interest of Muslims and the Islamic nation. You thus should be good with that person who has been given much from Allah, you should be humble to him by manners and good words. Allah says **‘Shun that which is evil by that which is better...’**.

You should be free from envy by abstaining its manifestation by your tongue and limbs, hating it by your heart, and you will know that you are on the right path in the war against envy when, if you had a power to cease other peoples’ blessings which Allah gave to them, you wouldn’t. This is a good proof for yourself that you have subdued envy and your heart has been cured, but always subject to attacks from this miserable poison of the heart.

Principle 5

Stinginess and love of wealth

Says Imam Ghazzali ‘know this that stinginess is a destroyer (of soul)’. Allah says **‘And whoever is saved from the stinginess of His self then he is victorious (in hereafter)’**.

The holy Prophet (saas) said *‘Beware of stinginess for it destroyed nations before you’*. The Prophet (saas) also said that *‘Stinginess and ill manners shouldn’t gather in a believer’*.

Know this that the root of stinginess is the love of wealth, and that is not liked, and one who has not wealth his stinginess is

not revealed, except by the love of wealth, and perhaps a generous man loves wealth so that he be known as a generous man and that is also disliked. Indeed the love for wealth for the sake of wealth and world is something which changes the heart towards the world. If a Muslim should love wealth then he should do so that he may spend in the way of Allah, such as charity, or jihad, or helping the needy and oppressed, with the desire not to be known as a spender to people. Allah says **‘O ye who believe let not your wealth and children divert you from Allah’**.

Know this, says Imam Ghazzali, that the love of wealth is not disliked in all its sides, as the prophet (saas) said, that *‘The good wealth is better for the good man’* and *‘the world is the farmland for the hereafter’*. How come wealth is disliked wholly when a good servant of Allah needs to perform many necessary and good deeds? Love of wealth is only disliked when it causes one to perform sin, when one uses it to spend on the world and its joys unrestrictedly because this will cause him to deepen his soul in the world of pleasures thereby gradually deceiving him to forget the hereafter, and thus the Prophet (saas) said *‘love of world is the root of all sins’*. Greed in permissible things can thus cause one to be lost, so one needs to learn to control his greed in permissible things, and that is when you are said to be doing Jihad with your self.

Imam Ghazzali then states how a man should know how much is termed as being enough for a certain person. This is not put here because Imam Ghazzali lived in a time when the

needs of men greatly varied from the needs of men today, thus each should follow the principles to know ones need, and follow sincerity. It can be stated that Islamic law divides our needs in to that which is necessary, that which a need is, and that which is a luxury. Necessary is that which if not fulfilled will harm someone physically, for example medicines. A need is that which if not fulfilled will cause someone hardships which are almost close to result in physical harm, such as air condition in hot weather. Luxury is that which are permissible to have and one has it for beautification and so on. In this thing a pious man should follow restraint as much as he is able, not being stingy on himself yet not being wasteful.

Imam Ghazzali lastly states how to cure oneself from stinginess, and he says as usual, by knowledge and deeds. Knowledge in knowing that it will harm a person after his death, and knowing that no wealth follows him to grave except good deeds, and knowing that all wealth belongs to Allah. By deeds is that he continues spending his wealth in good deeds and charity until it becomes his habit.

Principle 6

Love of High Rank and stupidity

Imam Ghazzali states that a person who desires to be of high rank in his heart is a person with a certain stupidity in himself, because this desire, he realizes by it his dreaming highness among people, thereby making him think his perfection and

making him want praise for it, while in reality he is not in the high ranks. He desires as if high ranked people were to be under him by his command and guidance. Indeed in truth desiring high rank is not something bad when one seeks it in the hereafter. One may seek high rank in the world among people, so that he may be praised, and said 'so and so is high among people, man of power', and this is a destroyer, and can take such a man in rebellion against Allah, when he is filled up with arrogance and self-prejudice. In hadeeth Qudsi Allah says that arrogance and pride are His robe and dress. This is to express the rightfulness of Allah to arrogance and pride, as if one is most rightful and entitled to his robe and dress.

Principle 7

Love of the world

As it has been mentioned before by Imam Ghazzali, in a Hadeeth, that love of world is the root of all sins, he again goes on to provide an independent discussion on it due to its gravity and intensity. He states that the world is not only wealth and high rank, rather they are two of the parts of this world, and the parts of the world are many. Your world is an expression of your condition before death. Whatever is your condition is, is an expression of your state of being in this world, and the hereafter is an expression of your state of being after death, thus all that may be possessed by you before death is the part of the world, your world, except knowledge, wisdom and freedom. Whatever remains with

you after death that is also sweet to the people of vision, such as knowledge, wisdom and freedom (of your inner self in Allah). These things even though exist with you in the world is really not of this world. You, the world and the things of the hereafter, are the three things which must be balanced by you, and your salvation will depend on which of the two is preceding and guiding your heart. Is it the world or the things of hereafter such as knowledge of Allah, wisdom and freedom in Allah? So ponder well servant of Allah what rules your heart. It must not be understood that one must flee away from the world in to the jungles, but rather one's world must be built around him by the things of religion, the things of the hereafter so that he even though exists in the world sees the higher realm of hereafter by his heart and spiritual vision. He will be the king of his world and a servant of the hereafter. World will not devour you but you will design the world around you by the obedience and love of Allah, by wisdom of Islam and knowledge of Allah, and being free in Allah's servitude. You will be a man yet not a man like the men who are ruled by the world. Know this that this world is a farmland for those who have understood this as such, because a man may go to a fertile land and his ignorance of farming deceives him about the fertility of the land. Such is the man from Allah who knows that this world is a fertile land because he has learnt to use the tools and art of farming from Allah which being servitude of Allah and His worship, as if these two are the knowledge teaching you farming and about the farmland i.e. earth. So farmers from Allah, farm well in this land of earth, so that your yielding can

be much that will result in eternal happiness and accomplishment. Take the means and be a wise farmer.

Know this that the eternal happiness will not come unless you know who is Allah, a knowledge which is pure and clean, and you love Him with a deep love surpassing your love for all other things. Indeed love for Allah is not attained except by a prolonged and routined remembrance of Him, and knowledge of Allah is not attained except by seeking of (knowledge) and pondering, and one doesn't acquire those two pre-requisites if he is engulfed by the hasty and destructive world, which engulfs man and his time. Neither love of Allah nor His knowledge will rule your heart unless your love for Allah is not maximum, breaking your love for all other things. So my friend, know Allah in the correct way, for if you know Allah in the wrong way, it will reflect your errors and ill deeds in the name of Islam. If you know Allah to be a cruel God, you will be cruel, and if you know of Allah to be only as a Merciful God, then you will not hesitate to sin, thus know Allah as He should be known, and know them from the great clerics of Islam, who have explained the knowledge of Allah in the books of theology, from Imam Abu Al-Hasan Ashari to this day, that pure knowledge about Allah has been transferred from generations to generations, and the law of Allah.

Know this that the great prophet Jesus (pbuh) said that *'the love of both the world and hereafter in (equal respect), cannot exist in a believer's heart just as water and fire cannot be held in a single pot.'* Our leader Prophet Muhammad

(saas) said *'The world is cursed and all things in it, except that which helps in Allah's remembrance'*. To remember Allah, one need to live, and to live one needs food and necessities, and to attain these one needs to work, thus a believer's purpose of existence is worship of Allah, and his life's effort is aiming to fulfil the means towards it, but know that the heart needs rest and the body needs relaxation. Marry, eat, give time with your family and friends, but nothing must be greater and more important than Allah's servitude and worship. Learn to balance this and you shall know the pathway of worship.

It has been narrated from Jesus (pbuh) that he saw the world in the form of an old woman filled with beauties and ornaments and he asked her 'how many did you marry'. She said 'I do not count their multitude (due to their great numbers)'. He asked 'Did they divorce you'? She said 'Nay! But I killed them all'. Jesus (pbuh) said 'Pity for your future husbands. How they do not consider your past ones!' I hope you have understood the meaning and interpretation of this narrated story from Jesus (pbuh).

To end, it should be said that this world is fleeting, and passing. It is only a place for the guests of Allah to rest a while, and a death trap for the godless. Let not the guests think for themselves the host's place as their own house!

Principle 8

Arrogance

Allah says '**And thus we seal the heart of every arrogant tyrant**'. The Prophet (saas) said *'The one who is arrogant and boastful in his heart, and imagines in its acquirement...will meet Allah while Allah is angry on Him'*. Thus know this that a man of God will revere the presence of Allah, and his reverence for Allah will make him humble and awe. The Prophet (saas) said that Allah increase a forgiving servant in honour and raises his rank through humility. Allah revealed to Moses (pbuh) *'Indeed I accept the prayer of the one who is humble for My grandeur, who doesn't express arrogance over My creation, whose heart is filled with My fear, who passes the day in my remembrance and who withholds himself from vanities and desires (forbidden).'*'

Know this the essence of servitude and beauty of worship is revealed from within, when your heart is humble to Allah and His creation, just towards the oppressors and the tyrants, and your life is coloured with Allah's remembrance and good deeds.

Imam Ghazzali defines arrogance as, seeing yourself over others in respect of perfection. That is to say you see yourself more perfect than others and express it through your arrogant words and behaviour. This is also confirmed by the saying of the Prophet (saas) *'I seek refuge to you (O Allah), from the spirit of arrogance'*. Then know this that the actions of the limbs express the arrogance of the heart when the spirit of arrogance is blown in you, and one of the examples of this is that you see others with contempt and anger if they do not give you the first salaam (greetings), or when you

preach goodness to people you act in anger and violence but demanding awe and respect when others preach to you. Arrogance is a disease of the heart among other diseases and its place is special than other ones, as it is solely for Allah, arrogance makes one rebel truth, thus all the leaders of disbelief were arrogant towards Allah from Iblis himself, to Pharaoh, Haman, Abu Jahl, up to Salman Rushdie, and Taslima Nasrin, of our time. Arrogance makes you deny the very essence of worship i.e. awe and humility towards Allah; it makes you the champion in using anger, envy, show off and harshness. Defeating it is one of the highest goals of Islamic spirituality.

Says Imam Ghazzali that, to defeat this one must first realize that he was created from a mere drop of semen, from non-existence, and that this man is open to sickness, disease and decay, he is in need of food, shelter and protection, even though he doesn't want to remain hungry or thirsty, he should know he even does not understand fully his own good, and the things which may benefit him, thus impatience drives and blurs his judgment. He must in one word acknowledge his imperfection in all possible ways, thus what prevents him from turning to the one who is free from all imperfections and decay i.e. his Creator? His arrogance; so this evil must be dealt with from our hearts.

Things that may cause people to be arrogant and boast about are: High rank, wealth, lineage and knowledge. So ponder well and keep your guard against the spirit of arrogance that may sneak in your heart.

Principle 9

Humility

Know that humility is the highest achievement which is attained by the heart and expressed through the limbs. It is the very essence of one of the highest traits of prophethood. It is a manifestation of the servitude where you are a living proof for the existence of the higher world of human existence, the world of worship and servitude, the world of spirituality. Humility is of twofold: the general and the higher. The general humility can be attained by all when he shows gentleness and manners in his talk and action. The higher humility is only attained after prolonged servitude of Allah by knowledge and wisdom of Allah and worship, of the law and theology. It is a leap from the permissible towards the devotional. It is for example when a servant wears long simple robe of worship, when he walks slowly with his head and eye in respect and love for others, when he sits in a way which is special separate from all other ways of sitting, such as the way one sits in prayer. It is when one prays to Allah not by raising his hands high but by prostration, lonely and isolated from the eyes of men. It is when your voluntary worship is between you and Allah, abstained from the notice of people, and society lest they say 'so and so is a man of God', or 'so and so is very pious'. It is when you spend the night in prayer and worship, after you have fulfilled the right of your wife what one woman needs from a man. It is when you worship does not make others feel suffered, and when your worship does not bother or irritate others, such as you

saying the names of Allah or saying the blessing on holy Prophet (saas) loudly, it is when you don't burst in crying to Allah, but rather when your tears fall from your eyes, while your voice remains silent and quiet. Know this you worship a Living, Hearing and Seeing God, whose life is unlike the bodies or living beings which needs nourishment, whose seeing is without two eyes which needs light to see, whose hearing is without ears which need medium of air, whose seeing and hearing doesn't depend on distance or closeness of the seen and heard. He is Allah our Lord, the beloved, closest to our hearts, more loving than the mother which feeds her child by her breast. Know this that only some examples of the higher humility is given, but there are many which manifests from within the heart, and such higher humility is not attained only by showing by your limbs, but it is a *direct necessary result* of the piety of the heart. A man can act as having higher humility but this is not as the one who has attained as a result of the inner piety and purification. So ponder well and make your sincerity and intention pure, for the Allah alone. An extreme neither an ignorant man can attain higher humility. Have you not seen how the movies about Prophets portray a snippet of higher humility through acting, but in truth the *attained* higher humility is higher than that.

Principle 10

Astonishment

Allah says **‘And the day of Hunain when the multitude (of your soldiers) astonished you’**. The Prophet (saas) said *‘three things are destroyer: Stinginess (which is obeyed), vanities (which is obeyed), and the self astonishment of a person by his own self’*. Ibn Masud, one of the senior companions of the Holy Prophet (saas) (on whose views and narrations the Hanafi legal school has been based), said *‘two things destroy: being hopeless from Allah’s mercy, and astonishment’*.

Says Imam Ghazzali, that the (reality of) self-astonishment is: Self-prejudice and the traits resulting from blessings (of Allah), and inclining to that, forgetting the one who has given such blessings, and also thinking yourself safe from the ceasing of the blessings which Allah has given you, and if you think of Allah and those blessings as thinking that you are entitled and rightful to Allah for such, then that is termed as *‘using evidence’*. The Prophet (saas) said that *‘the prayer of mudill (one who is using evidence)’ doesn’t rise above his neck’, i.e. is not accepted by Allah*. It should be made clear that using evidence is more like a metaphor to express the meaning which is for example: A person praying to Allah and saying, I prayed to Allah and I am entitled and rightful for His blessing, and Allah is obliged to give it to me. This is arrogance and belittling Allah. Iblis used such thinking when Allah commanded him to prostrate Adam (a) and said rightfully *‘You have created me from fire and Adam from clay, so I am higher than Adam, and cannot prostrate to the one who is lower’*, thereby Satan rejected the lord of Honour and Dignity, and Arrogance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (saas),

whose all sins past and future have been forgiven said to His companions ‘No one can *get in to paradise* except by Allah’s mercy or (by good deeds)’. The companions asked ‘Not even you O Prophet?’ He answered ‘*Not even me*’ and stated that Allah has shown him mercy and forgiven him.

Says Imam Ghazzali, that self-astonishment is the reason for having arrogance. One who sees the blessings of Allah either without his own deeds or which is acquired by lawful means, and is fearful of Allah and towards Allah of the ceasing of such blessings, and is happy with the blessings of Allah in the sense that Allah has given him is not the one who is a person with self-astonishment. Such a worshipper is one who doesn’t say with astonishment and contempt when Allah blesses someone ‘How come Allah blessed a sinner, or an ignorant, where as I being his worshipper is omitted from such blessing?’ It is called being unsatisfied with Allah’s judgment. Remember that a worshipper of Allah or a sinner having material or intellectual blessings or not having it is not a proof that Allah loves him or hates him. The principle is Allah loves all His devout servants and hates all persistent sinners who do not repent and turn to Him. Most of the Prophets in fact suffered with the greatest sufferings, that some of them even were killed brutally, slaughtered, by the children of Israel i.e. cursed Jews, and also pagans of the ancient times, before Jesus (pbuh). What are we to those blessed Prophets (pbuth), that even devout worshippers of their times used to kiss their cloths, staff, heads, hands and feet for blessings?

A devout worshipper rather, be astonished by the fact that how great is Allah that He created all things and me?! The more he realizes this more he will turn to Allah, and the *only* way to realize this is wisdom and knowledge but *not ignorance*. The first knowledge which one *must seek* is knowledge about Allah, who is He, His attributes, His names, and His sublimity and Perfection, as has been exposed from Holy Quran and Sunnah by the great scholars of Islamic theology such as Imam Ibn Asakir, Imam Ghazzali, Imam Fakhr Din Razi, Imam Baqillani, Imam ibn Furak and likes of him, who are numerous in Islam's 1500 years of intellectual history.

Principle 11

Show off

Allah, our Ancient One Lord the First without a start and the Last without an end, the Eternal, says **'Destruction to those who pray, whose prayer is out of laziness, whose prayer is but a show'**. The holy Prophet (saas) said *'Among the most feared things that I fear on you (Muslims) is the lesser shirk (lesser disbelief)'*, it was asked what is lesser shirk, He (saas) answered *'Show off (Riya). Allah will say on Day of Judgment when He will reward his devout servants for their deeds: Go to those to whom you were showing off (your deeds), and see if you can get any reward from them!'*

Show off can be shown in the following ways says Imam Ghazzali (may Allah mercy him):

Firstly: Showing off by the looks of the body. One who acts Islamically in such a way that his fasting, praying and so on seems to be such that he be said a man of fasting and praying, and he acts in such a way as if he is a man who gives importance to religion, and so on, but be aware that it is not always clear who is doing in a show off way and who is not, as this returns to the one who is showing off, to his heart.

Secondly: Showing off by cloths as if he is man who is full of abstinence from the world, and fleeing towards Allah, thus he wears a dress which exposes poverty yet he is rich, preventing himself to wear nice and clean cloths, which is neither wasteful and neither a way towards showing his richness to people.

Third: Showing off by words, as if he speaks in a way which shows he knows religion and a man said to be a wise man, but who is really a man who speaks of religion so that he be known a man of dignity.

Note that such is mentioned on the basis of religion because it is a matter returning to the worship of Allah, and Allah's worship is more entitled to be free from showing off for people, than other acts. A man can also show off in many other ways which may not directly be religious deeds, such as speaking in a way which shows he is a good speaker, or behaving in a way as if people look at him as a man of manners, or wearing cloths as if he wants to astonish people

by his cloths and establish his speciality among them, and so on.

Showing off religious worship for sake of people, is of the major sins. So ponder well and look in yourself, how it is built. The intensity of this show off depends on the basis of your intention, starting from lesser show off to higher show off. All are sins and the more pious and wise a servant of Allah is the more is his chance of checking the most minor of show off. The highest or the most sinful show off is that of a hypocrite who shows outwardly his a Muslim yet he is inside a despised and hated enemy against Islam and Allah, such as the hypocrites in the times of Prophet Muhammad (saas) and many more since then till this day. The least sinful is the show off of a Muslim who performs acts such as voluntary fast or prayers (nafal), in front of people, but if he were to be alone he wouldn't do such. Know this too, that the show off can come in the start of a good deed, or while doing it, or at the end. Thus a man may start it wholly for Allah, yet he may end up losing all when show off sparks from his heart at the end of the good deed. If it starts at the beginning but while ending he repents in his self and finishes it for sake of Allah, then says Imam Ghazzali, it is an acceptable deed to Allah, and Allah knows best. But fighting against this whether higher or lower show off is also one of the greatest jihad, and one of the prerequisites of self-purification, and fleeing to the ecstasy of Allah's friendship and presence.

Show off rises in the heart due to a person's want for self-praise and fear of insult and rejection by the people. Know

this if Allah is with you, the whole existence being against you has no harm against you. Will you see being praised by Allah Himself lord of dignity or the men who have no authority on honour or dignity, except what is earned either from Allah as a mercy, or from people through show off?

Know this show off can be tackled by hiding your worship from the people except that which is necessitated to be done in the open, such as Fasting in Ramadan, or when one prays in congregation and so on. In this instance, you are in fear of being struck by show off, and to tackle it you need to know that Allah is your Lord who will hold you in account, and men will only reject you that day when you will be judged for your deeds. At first when you are new in worship or have started a worship for Allah, the evil of your heart will whisper you in many ways, of which is show off, and when through self struggle by Allah's help you attain knowledge and wisdom of Him, of His greatness, of the fleeting of human world, and it i.e. the worship becomes a habit, show off will flee from your heart due to its failure. Therefore start by little, and then gradually as you give time with seeking knowledge from master clerics and books of traditional Islamic intellectual heritage, and increase in it, gradually increase your worship, remembering and seeking help to Allah all the time.

Imam Ghazzali points out exceptional cases, such as when your deeds may bring people to Islam and encourage them, you are allowed it to expose outwardly to people, being highly certain that show off will not engulf you, and if you are certain of falling under it, then you will not expose your

deeds of knowledge or worship, because saving your self is more important than saving others, from the displeasure of Allah.

Conclusion

Imam Ghazzali states that a person who wishes to be a higher worshipper, and closer to Allah, and prepare himself for higher wisdom and knowledge by Allah's mercy must know that each of these principles are interlinked and is not independent in itself. The mysteries and nature of the inner is known by guidance of Allah, and living on his dictates, and gradually it becomes more and more manifest, and Imam Ghazzali has spent his life studying religion and the mystics, and he has lived by it, as much as Allah willed, and he states from his in-depth wisdom and understanding of the mysteries of human heart.

A servant of Allah who wishes such must be aware and ponder of himself well before pondering about others. He must learn the faith and accept it by heart and practice the law, and in this journey of his, the traits of higher worship in him must be there, because one must make an effort to attain such principles or else he will fall in sins and thereby be lost in to his own confusions and uncertainties.

The general Muslims and Sufism

-Can any person be a Sufi?-

To answer this question one needs to know that there is the Sufi cleric, and there are the general Muslim who wish to be a worshipper in the level of Sufi. Any who has the prerequisites fulfilled can be a Sufi, but can all Muslims fulfil such? The answer is in the negative, as to fulfil the prerequisites of the Sufi cleric, one needs to devote himself time and time of prolonged religious study under master scholars of Islam, thus all Muslims cannot be a Sufi cleric as some Muslims need to be doctors, some engineers, some businessmen, some military men for Islam, and so on. Thus, any general Muslims who wish to walk in the higher path of Islamic worship (Islamic mysticism/Sufism) must follow the guidance of a Sufi cleric, thereby building his life and thought in the colour of Islam, and Islamic spirituality, on the basis of Holy Quran and Sunnah. In this age it is very difficult to find such a high calibre of Sufi cleric. Among the shias, there was the great revolutionary leader, Imam Khomeini who was a Sufi man and a revolutionary leader. Among the Sunnis, as there haven't been any revolutions yet in the modern age, we rarely hear of such great Sufi clerics. The good thing is they are not extinct, Alhamdulillah.

Misconceptions about Sufism

In the present time there have risen a certain brand of people calling their selves the Salafis, who have openly rejected the idea of Sufism, and have declared that Sufism is a heresy, and the Sufi clerics are either heretics or polytheists, out of Islam.

I would like to say, that this thing that is coming out of their extremist mouth is only either by pure ignorance of what is Sufism, or by pure hatred and envy for the Sufi clerics. I would like you to think like this. Say for example Bin Laden is allegedly blowing up towers, and killing innocent people, and he does this in the name of Islam, but does it mean Islam is terrorism? It doesn't at least to the intelligent aware people, except those foolish Americans who judge Islam by the actions of Bin Laden or his likes. The case of the Salafis is such, who are thinking about Sufism in the line of those ignorant Americans. My advice to those Salafis is that they should read the book of Imam Baqillani, Imam Ibn Furak and Imam Ghazzali, to learn the creed of Islam first, then the book of Imam Ghazzali and likes of him on Sufism, to clear up their ignorance. One of the scholars of Salafis in Saudi Arabia, in the department of Islamic Law while teaching us our course on Tawheed stated that scholars like Imam Fakhr din Razi and Imam Ghazzali, only took blessings from Holy Quran and Hadeeth of Prophet (saas), but they haven't learnt anything from the Holy Quran and Hadeeth! If this is what is said about the two of the greatest minds of Islam i.e. Ghazzali and Razi, then know this there are no scholars in Islam. Imam Ghazzali is known as 'the proof of Islam'; whereas Imam Razi is known as 'the pride of Islam'. These two are their nick names which vast majority of Islamic scholars of their times and after that, gave to them as an honour. Imam Ghazzali was a Sufi cleric who wrote extensively on this subject, among others, but his writings are of top class as you may have seen in the chapter 'Self-Purification'. Know this I have studied and still study

among many Salafi scholars and some not only praise the scholars like Imam Ghazzali and Imam Razi, but accept them with their deepest respect and honour. It is for some who use their position to spread the attacking view outside Saudi Arabia, about such scholars and their established ideas and creed.

A widespread misconception about Sufism is that:

- a) That they believe in the concept that Allah and creation is one and united
- b) They do not follow Shariah (Islamic law)

Both of these are refuted and unacceptable on the basis of what is stated in this book in the creed section and what is stated as God being Transcendent. Imam Ghazzali who was a Sufi refuted such claim of God being one and united with creation in book "Foundations of belief", by clearly pointing out the attributes of Him. As to the Sufis of paganism, they believe such blasphemous things. It should be noted that many mystics (Sufis) took Islam and pagan ideas to form their view of mysticism, and they have no relation with Islamic worship and mysticism (Sufism) what so ever.

There is a wide misconception that the concept of allegiance at the hands of a Sufi is something new in Islam. It should be cleared that it is not an allegiance based on whims and desires. Rather it should be seen that Islam promotes a proper open and very close relationship between the Islamic

scholars/priests/clerics whatever you call it, and the general Muslims. It is because a proper relationship between the Islamic clerics and the general Muslims will ensure the imparting of Islamic knowledge and guidance for the general Muslims in their daily lives. A Sufi cleric must be free and open and always responding to the need and sufferings of the general Muslims, and this relationship is a relationship based on trust, belief and honesty. In this age the distance between the Islamic clerics and the general Muslims are very far, and the Islamic clerics have failed to build this relationship, as well as the general Muslims. Sufism just promotes this by reminding the general Muslims that 'we the Islamic clerics are here for your need, to teach you Islam and guide you in the way of Islam, so that you can build yourself on a journey towards Allah'. This is known as the concept of allegiance under the Islamic clerics, and this allegiance is not based on giving money, or prostrating to the Islamic clerics, or venerating them, and neither the Islamic clerics should misuse this trust from the general Muslims, like the Rabbis of the Jews who completely exploited the trust of the general Jews in the Roman times. Cursed are such clerics. Let us for a moment consider the fact of Imam Khomeini being a Shia Sufi and its role in the revolution and governance of Iran. This man whose piety and awe for Allah was so much that in his biography it is related that he didn't accept any state given villas for his stay after revolution, rather he rented a house from one of his friends, or one of his friends gave a small built house for his stay. He used to meet delegations from United Nations in his little shack, on the ground. This is what the aim

of Sufism is: building strong piety and love for Allah and hereafter, and equipping the servants of Allah with knowledge. It is sad that in this day the so called Sufism has become a trade and money giving to the so called Sufi people, or *Pir-mureed* as they are known in Bangladesh. Just as Aristotle said that a king must be a philosopher for his wisdom and wide knowledge, it should be said that a leader of an Islamic nation must too be a Sufi Cleric, one who will sacrifice his self for Allah and the well being of Allah's servants who would look at the leader for wise counsel and advice. My giving of example of Imam Khomeini or Aristotle in no way means I support them unconditionally, or I promote their beliefs and creed. Intelligent people, I believe have understood my purpose for giving those two examples.

As to the *tareeqas* which Sufis of the world promote, it should be said, that the point is worship of Allah, and A Sufi cleric (a Sufi by definition of Sufism), must only guide people by what is established by Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet (saas). After learning the Islamic sciences and philosophy of Islam, a Sufi, I believe will know what it means to be a pious wise cleric.

To end...

From our discussions it has been clear that what is following Islam in the Sufi way. Allah divides the believers, the Muslims in degrees in Holy Quran, which means not all of us are equal in our faith and practice of Islam. Some are higher than others, the highest being the prophets of Allah (pbuth), and

the lowest being the persistent sinners, who are continuing on their sins either small or big, yet knowing and acknowledge their wrong and misguidance. Sufism seeks to bring the Muslims from that lowest point of servitude to the highest level attainable after prophets (pbuth), Allah willing. Sufism is a means to increase our ranks of spiritualism and wisdom. Are we ready to take this journey towards Allah then?

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